The Jane Austen Society

Report for 2024

the Jane Austen society

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Chairman's Report for 2024

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting, I assumed the mantle of Chair of the Trustees of the Society from Professor Richard Jenkyns. As I remarked at the time, his is not a hard act to follow, but an impossible one, such that I am not going to make the attempt. Every Chair has had different challenges during his or her time in office. One of mine is to continue the modernisation of the Society's structure to make it fit for purpose and to reduce the burden on trustees and volunteers, all of whom give of their spare time to run various aspects of the Society's affairs. As Richard rightly said, their roles are in many ways more important than the role of the Chair.

The seminal change was the conversion to a charitable incorporated organisation in 2022. In 2024 the Society has seen the introduction of a new membership system, which will automate membership and event management, and which will make transparent to each member the information which the Society holds about them. Members have been very patient with the numerous enquiries which have been raised in the course of uploading the data – thank you.

The Honorary Treasurer, Andrea Clarke, has pursued a modernisation programme of her own in the last twelve months: the adoption of automated accounting software which will streamline the preparation of the Society's accounts, and which will enhance the assurance given to trustees and members that the Society's affairs are being properly administered. This development has been invisible to members, but has marked a significant improvement in the Society's resilience.

In late 2023, the Society belatedly joined the online party by setting up a series of so-called Winter Webinars, which have been very well received, particularly by our further flung and less mobile members. These will continue, although with a summer break.

The world is in the midst of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth. No other writer, with the possible exception of Shakespeare, excites so much interest, notwithstanding that many know Austen only through the various adaptations and spin-off productions. The 'noise' has not been of much benefit to the Society so far. It has proved impossible to respond to very short-notice media requests, one example being to produce several dozen of our members decked out in period costume at a very early hour at some not very accessible location. Chance would be a fine thing. Instead, the Society encourages members and the public to make their personal mark on the anniversary by contributing to the Two Minute Tribute – your record of what Jane Austen means to you in not more than two minutes, to be published on the Society's website. It is the personal relationship with Austen that sustains her appeal and will, I hope, also sustain the Society. Details can be found on the Society's website.

Having modernised the operational base of the Society, the focus of the next twelve months will be to increase membership and improve membership retention.

The challenge facing the Society is to prove its relevance in a world where reading seems to be confined to detective and fantasy fiction, where attention spans are short and shortening, and avatars seem infinitely preferable to the real thing. Without members, the Society will not be able to fulfil its charitable objectives. The Society needs to adapt what it offers to appeal to the next generation and to secure a viable future. The trustees would be pleased to hear from members as to what shape they think this future should take.

Heather Thomas

Minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting held at Winchester College on 13 July 2024

1. **The President.** The President, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, welcomed members to the meeting. He thanked Winchester College for hosting the AGM for the second year, and for accommodating the Society despite the work being done on New Hall, which meant it was out of use. Instead, the AGM was taking place in a very well-appointed marquee. The hospitality of the College was much appreciated, and the President thanked Phillip Holroyd-Smith, Head of Events at the College, accordingly. Mr Holroyd-Smith also noted that the College was going to be opening 8 College Street to the public in 2025. This was the place of Jane Austen's death, and it was the first opportunity the public would have to view the interior of the property. Access would be ticketed and tickets would go on sale in September. Having formally opened the meeting, the President handed over to the Society's Chairman, Professor Richard Jenkyns as the outgoing Chairman of the Society to continue with the business of the AGM.

2. **The Chairman.** The Chairman said he would begin with farewells. Three trustees were retiring. Clare Graham had handled the liaison with Groups and Branches with tact, charm and unobtrusive efficiency. She also possessed a drily humorous view of the world, an asset for any admirer of Jane Austen. Matthew Huntley had demonstrated a similarly equable spirit in his vital role as Treasurer, together with inimitable skill and vigilance. He coped calmly and patiently with the seemingly endless banking complications involved in the Society's transition to CIO status. The third person retiring was himself. He had been Chairman for ten years and a trustee for some years before that, and if members thought that was too long, the Charity Commission agreed with them. Under the new constitution it would not happen again. It was important to say that many of the jobs undertaken by the trustees and volunteers were more difficult and demanding than that of the Chairman: Secretary, Treasurer, the Membership Secretaries, the editors of the *News Letter* and the *Annual Report*, and the leaders of Groups and Branches. He should add the Vice-Chairman to that list, since he had shouldered the organisation

of the AGM and had generously agreed to stay on an extra year to handle the special arrangements for the 250th anniversary. The Minutes Secretary, Fiona Ainsworth, produced meticulous minutes which could only be enjoyed and appreciated by the trustees, as well as running the Website and Social Media Committee. The Chairman thanked them all and expressed his gratitude to the trustees as a whole; it had been an honour and a pleasure to work with them.

The past year had seen the bedding-in of the new constitution. In February, the Chairman had attended an outstandingly successful Study Day in London, organised by Maureen Stiller. In the same month he had chaired the annual meeting of the representatives of the Groups and Branches, now held on Zoom, which allows everyone from all parts of the country to be present. The recovery from Covid now seemed to be more or less complete, and the vigour and variety of activities were impressive. The trustees were working on plans for 2025, and members would hear more details soon. One special event had already been announced on the website: the AGM would be held at Steventon, at the site of the parsonage where Jane Austen was born. When the prospect of going to Steventon was first mooted at a meeting of the trustees, they responded with such unbridled enthusiasm that the Chairman felt as though he were chairing the Brontë Society. The Vice-Chairman, Michael Kenning, would now give more information about the event.

3. **The Vice-Chairman.** The Vice-Chairman, the Reverend Canon Michael Kenning, took the opportunity to inform members that the 2025 AGM would take place in Pump Field, Steventon on Saturday, 5 July 2025. This was a week earlier than usual. Steventon Parish Council was staging a weekend of events. St Nicholas Church would be available for evensong. The usual bus service would be offered from Basingstoke. Details of the programme and directions would be published early in 2025.

4. **The Hon. Treasurer.** Matthew Huntley explained that the accounts were not straightforward this year owing to the transfer of assets from the former Society to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation. A comparison from one year to another would not be possible. The Society had benefited in the year from a significant legacy as well as meaningful donations, particularly from some life members. The trustees were very grateful for this additional support.

While events such as the Annual Conference and Study Day were expected to be self-financing, the AGM was a significant cost notwithstanding income from guest tickets. The cost of printing and posting the *News Letters* and the *Annual Report* had risen relentlessly. The deficit had been offset by a rise in the value of the Society's investments, which had rebounded in the year to more than £250,000.00. The investments also provided much-needed income with a yield of about 3%.

Membership stood at 1,196, of which sixty-four were joint and 497 life members. There were 183 overseas members. The majority of new members were

now joining online.

As mentioned by the Chairman, members were reminded that the Society had new banking arrangements. The former TSB bank account had now closed. Where members paid through PayPal on the website, there was no need to set up a PayPal account.

Matthew briefly introduced Andrea Clarke as his successor to the role of Honorary Treasurer.

Before continuing to questions, the President intervened to thank Professor Jenkyns, who wore his considerable learning very lightly and who might better be described as a professor of civilisation. His contribution to the Society was much appreciated.

There being no questions, the proceedings were closed.

Reports for 2024

Cambridge Group

Members: 51. *Subscription*: £15 individuals, £20 couples. *Cost of events*: meetings free to members except ticketed events. £5 for guests in person or on Zoom. *Publication*: annual newsletter.

The Cambridge Group is growing, with members joining locally, from across the country and from abroad. Our programme is now much more varied and, where possible, also available on Zoom. We have also launched our own YouTube channel. Our collaboration with the Jane Austen Society of Jylland and Fyn in Denmark continues, as well as the Wyoming Group, when time differences allow.

In February we were honoured to have Professor Janine Barchas give the first talk about her most recent research with an illustrated presentation called, 'Lent to copy – Art Rentals in the Age of Jane Austen'. This well-researched and very entertaining talk threw new light on Cassandra Austen as an artist and the practice of renting pictures. We learnt of a London art supplier who lent out prints in the 1790s to amateur artists 'on the plan of a library'. Janine's meticulous research showed us some of Cassandra's relatively unknown work and, amazingly, the source of some of her inspiration for the portraits used in Jane Austen's 'A History of England'. The talk, which took place in person and on Zoom, provoked a very interesting discussion.

March saw some members of the Cambridge Group make a trip to the beautiful Georgian town of Stamford in Lincolnshire. The group made the most of the day with a tour of the town, guided by our own member, Jennifer Wilson, a resident of Stamford. The afternoon included a visit to the George Hotel and the wonderful St Mary's Bookshop where the group were able to view a first edition of *Pride and Prejudice*. Their ultimate destination was to a performance of 'Austen's Women – Lady Susan', a one-woman show acted by the very talented actress Rebecca Vaughan. The performance was much enjoyed, and the members of the party were thrilled to be able to spend some time with Rebecca after her appearance. Members reported that she was 'impressive' with 'a great stage presence'.

Another visit was made in April, this time to the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney, Northamptonshire. The group was given a warm welcome and the tour was appreciated by all. The museum is dedicated to one of Jane Austen's favourite poets, William Cowper, and John Newton the writer of the hymn, 'Amazing Grace'.

In May, our Chair, Hazel Mills, gave an illustrated talk, via Zoom, on 'Cambridge Connections to Jane Austen'. It is not known that Jane ever ventured to Cambridge, but she certainly knew people who did. We discovered that Jane had several extended family members who had attended Cambridge, including a

Master of Christ's College and a Provost of King's College. We also found out that Jane sent her heroes to Oxford and cads such as George Wickham and Henry Crawford to Cambridge.

Our Annual Strawberry Tea took place in July this year in the picturesque Madingley Village Hall. The attendees enjoyed an abundant number of cakes, savoury scones and strawberries, plus a punch adapted from a Georgian recipe. The group then entertained each other with poems they had chosen for the occasion. Members were also able to join in on Zoom, some providing their own strawberry tea.

Another theatrical visit was made by some members to Tolethorpe Hall in Rutland for a picnic and an open-air performance of *Sense and Sensibility*. Members were very impressed with the set, but some felt that the script strayed too far from the novel and played up the comedy more than necessary.

Our September meeting was a costumed, dramatised reading from *Emma*, cleverly adapted by our Secretary, Margaret Seale. The cast and narrators kept us thoroughly entertained. The dramatisation is now available on our YouTube channel.

For our October meeting, Hazel Mills returned on Zoom with another illustrated talk, 'Jane Austen's Unexpected Acquaintances'. This was inspired by her research for the 'Jane Austen Daily' Facebook page, when she discovered that the people she encountered recorded in Jane's letters included some very interesting and unexpected characters, disproving the myth perpetuated by Jane's brother Henry, and nephew Edward Austen-Leigh, that she 'went very little into society during the last ten years of her life'.

The final meeting of the year was the Annual Birthday Lunch held again, appropriately, in the library of Madingley Hall. Sue Pemberton, one of our members, shared some of the history of the Cotton family who lived at the Hall when Jane was writing her novels. We were thrilled when we realized that Jane's brother Francis knew the owner of Madingley at this time, Admiral Charles Cotton, and mentioned receiving directions from him in a letter in 1808. We were further entertained by a short concert given by the incredible harpist, Eleanor Medcalf.

Hazel Mills

Hampshire Branch

Members: 82. *Subscription*: £5 individuals, £8 couples living at the same address**.**
Publications: two newsletters per year and a periodical, *Occasional Papers*.

The 2024 season started with our Annual General Meeting in April. This was followed by our speaker, Joy Pibworth, one of our committee members, who is very knowledgeable on many subjects related to Jane Austen. Joy's talk was 'All his choicest nursery of plants – looking at what the Sotherton gardener could have had in his nursery'. The subject of the talk was the introduction of exotic plants that would have been available to gardeners at the time. Jane Austen made several references in her novels to gardens, plants and garden design, most notably in

Mansfield Park. The talk was fascinating and very well received by everyone who was there.

In June, we visited the historic Silk Mill in Whitchurch, situated on Frog Island on the River Test. The river has provided power to the Mill for over 200 years and continues to do so. Before our tour of the Mill, the guide told us of its rather chequered history. Inside the building we were shown the equipment and many of the weaving processes still used today. Those of us who visited the Mill would certainly recommend a visit there.

Our next planned event, in September, was to be a visit to the beautiful, historic Winchester College. Unfortunately, however, there was not enough interest for the visit to go ahead. Winchester College is a venue we have visited before, some years ago. Whether this was the reason, or whether it was just badly timed, we were not sure.

We held our popular, annual Discussion Event on 23 October. The subject was 'How have your thoughts on Jane Austen's writings changed over the years?' There were some very lively and interesting contributions.

A project at Jane Austen's House in 2024 was the restoration and reframing of a picture of the Revd George Austen. With the picture is a note, written in Jane Austen's hand, stating that the picture is of her father. Our donation to Jane Austen's House next year will go towards the restoration and placing of this picture and note in a more suitable frame that will preserve these objects for posterity.

As a Branch we have supported an initiative in Overton to establish the Overton Jane Austen Trails and we attended the launch weekend in September.

Lesley Wilson

Kent Branch

Members: 101. *Subscription*: £12 individual, £18 per household. *Publications*: three newsletters and one periodical, *Austentations*, per annum.

2024 was an exciting and memorable year for the Kent Branch as we celebrated our thirtieth anniversary. As well as our usual calendar of events, we added two events for members: a Zoom by our Patron Professor Jennie Batchelor; and a much-enjoyed Regency dancing session. There were just three months in the year when there was not a Jane Austen event in Kent.

In January we remembered Francis Austen in a special Tribute prepared by our newsletter editor Dianne Brick. This included Jane Austen's poem 'The Happy Lab'rer' which was read at his funeral; Sheila Johnson Kindred's own written tribute, and delightful pictures of Francis at our Godmersham Summer Event, which he never missed. January also saw another popular Craft Event on Zoom, this time making bookmarks and cards featuring the Jane Austen silhouette. It was particularly nice to welcome some of our new members to this enjoyable event.

In March the AGM and Spring Meeting was held at Aylesford Priory near Maidstone. The Chairman reminded members of the early days of the Branch and

its first AGM on 8 October 1994 when Alwyn Austen was elected Chairman and Nigel Nicolson President. Gesiena van Setten was elected as our new Treasurer. Following the AGM a scintillating talk was given by Charlotte Cornell, 'The First Lady of Literature, Aphra Behn'. Aphra was born into a humble family in Harbledown near Canterbury, and had an extraordinary life, becoming a novelist, a playwright and a spy. She was the first woman to be a professional paid writer, but her sexually liberated romps were considered unacceptable. She was eventually buried in Westminster Abbey but not in Poets' Corner, and her tombstone reads 'Here lies proof that wit can never be defence enough against mortality'.

In April we held our first Novel Views on Zoom, 'Secrets and Lies in Jane Austen's Novels'. This proved a very fruitful topic, as secret loves and engagements are central to so many plots and narratives. We discussed good and bad secrets, and of course there are many more of the latter, often perpetrated by villains such as Wickham, Willoughby and Mr Elliot, and also by Lucy Steele. The most outright liar is the egregious John Thorpe, although white lies are told too and there are various hidden agendas. Anything is possible in Jane Austen.

June saw the annual Summer Event at Godmersham with a talk, picnics and musical entertainment, and an opportunity to visit the Godmersham Heritage Centre and view the bench installed in memory of Alwyn and Francis. We were delighted to welcome as our speaker Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, President of the Jane Austen Society, who was brought up in Kent. Sherard's address 'What Jane Austen means to my family and me' was eloquent, scholarly and moving. In the afternoon we listened to talented singer Sandra Booer, who had put together a delightful programme of classical music and folk songs of Jane Austen's period and accompanied herself on the keyboard.

In August the Annual Austen Ramble followed the path of an earlier ramble in 2014 in East Kent. The five-mile walk started at Goodnestone Park, along the Serpentine Walk around the estate which Jane would have known well, taking in the ice house and a view of Rowling, where Edward and Elizabeth first lived and where Jane reportedly started writing *First Impressions*. Stops were made at The Griffin's Head Inn at Chillenden for lunch and at the Old Dairy Café at Goodnestone for tea.

In September we held the first of our extra events to mark our thirtieth birthday, Regency Dancing at Matfield Village Hall. We were joined by Chalemie, an early music and dance group, who led us through the history and etiquette of Regency dance and encouraged our faltering steps. This proved a very popular event.

In October we met on Zoom for our second Novel Views to discuss the hot topic of 'Austen's Bitches'. There were plenty from which to choose, from Elizabeth Elliot to Mrs Elton, Fanny Dashwood and at times, Emma herself. We concluded that some could be partially excused, such as Mary Musgrove and Mary Crawford, but that Isabella Thorpe and Mrs Norris have all the vices. It was suggested that Jane Austen herself can be quite bitchy in some of her letters. Features of an Austen bitch are insincerity, vanity, selfishness, unkindness to others and being self-opinionated and thoughtless.

The second of our extra events was a Zoom lecture given by our Patron Professor Jennie Batchelor, '"A mere Mrs Smith, an everyday Mrs Smith": Introducing the extraordinary Charlotte Smith, 1749-1806'. Jennie's description of the life of Charlotte Smith, writer, poet and children's author, included a fresh look at Mrs Smith in *Persuasion*, an intriguing and troubling character whose financial hardship and loss of gentility mirrored Charlotte's own. Charlotte took up her pen in 1794 to support her children and eventually wrote ten novels under her own name.

In November our Winter Lunch Meeting was held at Howfield Manor near Canterbury, where we enjoyed an excellent lecture given by independent researcher Azar Hussain, 'Jane Austen Faints: a new perspective on an old story'. That Jane Austen 'fainted away' on hearing the news of leaving Steventon is received truth, but Azar constructed a fascinating talk questioning the authenticity of sources. After its first iteration in 1817, in the first edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, Jane's distress became accepted and then exaggerated, despite her own comment in Letter 29, 'I get more and more reconciled to our removal'. Azar's final advice was always question sources and never take fright at a footnote.

The final event of the year was, as always, the Annual Birthday Lecture held at the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Tonbridge, where Jane's father preached. We were delighted to welcome a return visit from Professor John Mullan, who delivered a characteristically sparkling lecture on the joys of 'Jane Austen's Dialogue'. Dialogue is always threefold between the speaker, the listener and the reader, each construing the content differently. John pointed out the similarities in Mrs Elton's and Emma's dialogues, but where we dislike it in the mouth of Mrs Elton, we recognize ourselves in Emma.

Three issues of our full-colour newsletter appeared throughout the year, edited by Dianne Brick, including a fiendish quiz, information from galleries and auctions and a 'Getting To Know You' feature introducing new members of the Branch. The twenty-fourth edition of *Austentations*, edited by Paul Morris and filled with contributions from Branch members, is still to be published and will be ready for our AGM in March 2025.

Jill Webster

London Branch

Members: 97. *Subscription*: £12.50 individuals. *Cost of meetings*: £10 members, £12 guests. *Publications*: two newsletters per year.

In January we welcomed Mike Rendell who spoke on Astley's Circus which is mentioned in *Emma*. This was a most engaging talk, very well illustrated and delivered, showing why Astley's was famous enough to merit a mention in the novel.

Our next talk, given by Dr John Avery Jones, was on the tricky subject of entails. We were grateful for his willingness to step in at the last minute when our original speaker was indisposed. Entails turned out to be considerably more

complex than our basic understanding of Mr Collins and his designs on Longbourn. But what became readily apparent was how thoroughly Austen understood the legalities of the law of entail and how her forensic mind was able to utilise this.

At our April AGM, long-term committee member, Barbara Calderbank, stood down and expressions of gratitude were recorded for her many years of commitment to the London Branch. The morning session was run by committee members and consisted of small group discussions on topics such as siblings and their roles in the novels, and different types of humour and their effects. Dr Lauren Nixon spoke in the afternoon on the subject of 'Fireside Frights – The Gothic Tradition and Jane Austen'. The appeal of the gothic and indeed its enduring attraction in modern culture were fully explored.

Moving towards autumn our second whole day event comprised an excellent lecture by Martin Heard on 'Vice, Virtue and Vitriol' in the satirical prints of the Regency and Georgian Age. Martin proved to be a very fluent speaker, needing no notes and totally the master of this most entertaining art form. Our second speaker, Jessica Bull, has written a series of novels, one of the latest of which is 'Miss Austen Investigates'. This was a very charming and personal talk, showing the impact of Austen's writing on the speaker as a child and throughout her professional life, which led to this later flowering in her own writing.

The Patricia Clarke Lecture was given by Professor Jane Stabler of St Andrews University. The subject was 'Jane Austen and British Intelligence'. Professor Stabler took us into Austen's use of spying, listening and observing in the novels and explained how these are deployed in both plot and character development.

Our December Birthday Lunch at The Women's University Club was very popular this year with over sixty attendees. Professor John Mullan, our Patron, spoke afterwards on the significance of the use of one or two words in the novels. One he selected was 'perhaps' and he certainly tested our textual knowledge of the novels on the multifaceted effect of this word.

The London Branch is doing well. We are recruiting younger members via a determined social media presence and we look forward to the 250-year celebrations in 2025.

Hellen Blackwell

Midlands Branch

Members: 51. *Subscription*: £15 individuals, £12 concessions. *Publications*: two newsletters and a periodical, *Transactions*.

2024 has been successful year for our branch with well-attended events, featuring academic subjects as well as talks with more performative and interactive aspects.

The AGM was held in March and a new Membership Secretary was elected. Our Study Day, also held in March, was attended by over twenty people. Peter Brown gave an incredibly informative talk on 'Travel in the Novels of Jane Austen'. It focused mainly on the different types of carriages, the income that

would be needed to own and maintain such vehicles, and the cost involved in travelling post. Peter was followed by Angela Barlow with a talk on 'Jane Austen's London'. Angela is a performative speaker, who incorporated Jane Austen's letters, as well as images, to illustrate the London of the time, including the unsavoury aspects of the city. Finally, we were treated to a Regency dancing demonstration from the Meryton Mob led by Karen Evens, who gave a short presentation before the dancing commenced. Members were encouraged to join in a set or two.

Our Strawberry Tea was at Hodnet Hall in Shropshire. Despite the summer storm, the twenty-six people in attendance were able to wander around the extensive grounds before the clouds burst. Fortunately, we were mercifully warm and dry inside for a delicious afternoon tea. Several of those in attendance chose to wear period costume.

At the Autumn Gathering, attended by twenty people, we had a delightful talk by Jack Barber, our treasurer, on 'Jane Austen's Visit to Stoneleigh Abbey'. What made this talk such a joy was that Jack had compiled images from numerous visits the branch had made to the Abbey in the past. Holly Kirby, was next to speak, with a talk on historical dressmaking. Holly is a curator at the National Trust property Attingham Park and she brought in several of the costumes she had made with historical sewing techniques. From maid servants' outfits, to day dresses, to the best way to make up your bonnet, Holly treated us to some fascinating sewing-related Austen information and insights. Finally, Dr Emma Probett gave a talk on 'Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell: New Perspectives on *Persuasion*'. Emma explored why these two seemingly disparate authors are often compared and what parallels might actually exist between them.

Fourteen people braved Storm Darragh to attend our Festive Gathering at the end of the year. After a buffet lunch, we were entertained by readings of Jane Austen's poetry and a festive extract of *Persuasion*, read by committee members Jack Barber and Catherine Westwood, followed by a lively discussion on the Austen characters we would invite for Christmas dinner.

Emma Westwood

Northern Branch

Members: 150. *Subscription*: £7 individual, £10 couples living at the same address. *Cost of meetings*: variable but generally £6 members or £8 non-members. *Publications*: three issues of *Impressions* per year.

Our year began on 20 January with a Zoom lecture – 'Regulating and Hating: D.W. Harding and Jane Austen', by Professor Freya Johnson of St Ann's College, Cambridge University. This lecture looked at the work of the literary critic and academic psychologist Denys Harding (1906-1993) and in particular his book *Regulated Hatred and Other Essays* written in the late 1930s. An example used in the work was Lady Russell and her angry reaction to Captain Wentworth transferring his affections from the worthy Anne to Louisa Musgrove, then having to reverse her opinion at the end of the novel.

On the evening of 30 March, Matthew Howarth of M.H. Historical held a Regency Ball at the Cedar Court Hotel in Harrogate and the branch was invited to provide a speaker in the afternoon. Marilyn Joice, Chair of the Northern Branch, presented 'Jane Austen and the Development of the Novel'. Current branch members were offered free entry to the talk.

In May, our patron Dr Bill Hutchings gave a lecture on 'Proportion and Disproportion in *Pride and Prejudice*', an examination of proportion and disproportion, or balance and imbalance, in the physical and textual structure in the content of the story and characters. He considered physical structure through the eyes of Elizabeth first seeing Pemberley – the symmetry of the scene, in the house and the landscape. Bill then discussed Elizabeth and Darcy's interaction with each other, also, how the novel was proportioned – divided into three volumes with the pivotal first proposal mid-point through the second volume. We finished with the second proposal, examining the balance and length of sentences that lead to shared empathy and understanding – and, of course, a happy ending.

We had two outings this year, the first to Clifton Castle on 27 June. The tour was led by Nick Hill the 9th Marquess of Downshire. Nick's ancestor Lord George, who was the fifth son of the 2nd Marquess of Downshire, married two of Jane's nieces: Cassandra and Louisa Knight. Although the actual castle is no more, the Georgian House in its place has stunning views of the river and some interesting modern sculptures.

On 13 July our second outing was to Hartlepool's Historic Quay. We spent the whole day there, enjoying the period shops and houses, the Fighting Ships exhibition, and a demonstration of firing a musket. We had a very interesting guided tour of the sailing ship HMS *Trincomalee*. Although she never saw service, in 1847 she sailed for the West Indies and was based on Bermuda, which was under the command of Admiral Francis Austen.

Lucy Adlington of History Wardrobe presented 'Ladies of Leisure' on 12 October. Lucy has enlightened and entertained the branch many times and on this occasion she turned her attention to what leisure activities there were in the Regency period: sports such as cricket and running, bathing, dancing, reading, playing cards and gambling. Lucy demonstrated some sporting activities and there were costumes to look at, a stunning embroidery sample, prints and artefacts.

Our last meeting of the year on 9 November featured a talk called 'Jane Austen and the Textile Revolution' by Sue Wilkes, author and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. We were given a potted history of how fabrics were produced before and after the Industrial Revolution in England. The social impact of industrialisation was discussed, particularly the terrible working conditions for very young children. Quotes from Jane and her novels gave us a useful context.

Facebook showcases our forthcoming events, encourages increased branch membership and enables members of the public to contact us with queries. In turn, we follow other Jane Austen sites and share useful information, for example from Jane Austen's House and 'Jane Austen Daily'.

Nicky Carty

Scottish Branch

Members: 66. *Subscription*: £20 individuals, £25 couples.

The Scottish Branch celebrated its Twentieth Anniversary with special events throughout the year. A special commemorative booklet was produced and copies sent to all existing and past members.

Our AGM was held on 10 February, when Professor Katie Halsey of Stirling University presented 'Teaching *Sanditon* and the other Manuscript Works'.

Hilary Aitken gave a lively and entertaining talk on 13 April, 'Mothers in Jane Austen – the Good, the Bad, and the Really Terrible'. The subject sparked a lively debate that continued over tea at the Pitbauchlie Hotel in Dunfermline.

On 18 May, Angela Barlow gave a fascinating talk, 'Jane Austen and London'. Her talk was well illustrated with maps to show not only the places that Jane herself visited in London, but also all her characters. Angela read excerpts from the novels in a vivacious way that brought the characters to life.

The summer outing on 22 June was to the National Portrait Gallery of Scotland. Our enthusiastic tour guide led a group of fifteen members through the gallery, highlighting both sculptures and portraits that related to Jane's lifetime.

In July, Professor Juliette Wells from Goucher College, Baltimore presented a beautifully illustrated talk, 'An Early Reader of Austen in North America: Christian, Countess of Dalhousie'. Since both Lady Dalhousie and her husband were born close to Edinburgh, this was a topic of great interest to us in Scotland. Her ancestral home, Coalstoun House, and her husband's, Dalhousie Castle, are now hotels. Lady Dalhousie was a remarkable woman, well read and intelligent. She travelled widely with her husband, who held the post of Governor in Canada and in India, visiting Madeira, St Helena and the Cape of Good Hope on the way. Christian not only owned early copies of Jane Austen's novels, but also enjoyed them enough to comment on them in her diaries.

An Anniversary Study Day was held on 26 October with three speakers and a two-course meal at the Pitbauchlie Hotel. The first speaker of the day was Gillian Dow. Her talk, 'Lost in Translation? Austen Abroad' was delivered in her usual competent style with good illustrations and an enormous depth of knowledge. The second paper, 'A Message for Then and Now – *Mansfield Park* – a novel

for all time' was written by Richard Moore, but condensed and read by our committee member, Elspeth Scott. Jane Stabler filled the after-lunch slot with her enlightening talk on 'Jane Austen and British Intelligence'.

Our final meeting of the year was an Afternoon Birthday Tea Party on 7 December to celebrate both Jane Austen's birthday and our twentieth anniversary. Our entertainment for the afternoon comprised readings by members from *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* as well as a quiz on Regency slang and another on music.

Marlene Lloyd-Evans

South West Branch

Members: 73. *Subscription*: £10. *Cost of all-day events*: with buffet lunch, £20 members, £24 non-members; without lunch, £12 members, £13 non-members.

We began our 2024 programme of events in January, with an intriguing morning talk by Dr Jane Darcy, entitled 'Green glass spectacles and gooseberry wine: what Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* taught Jane Austen about comic writing'. One of those lessons, we learned, involved the avoidance of over-complicated plot devices. Dr Darcy was followed by Professor Janine Barchas of the University of Texas at Austin and a visiting fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. Her talk, entitled 'Aspirational Luxury and Rental Options in Jane Austen's Era' considered the opportunities for hiring works of art for the purposes of copying. Dr Barchas's extensive research revealed many instances of Cassandra Austen copying prints obtained in this way.

The first talk at our March meeting was given by independent researcher Azar Hussain. Entitled 'Jane Austen Faints: a new perspective', it was an exploration of what we think we know about Jane Austen's reception of the news that her family were to quit Steventon and why the story told by relations years after the event should be treated with scepticism. Intriguingly, we were exhorted 'never to take fright at a footnote'. The second talk by Peter Sabor on letters in Jane Austen was entitled 'My paper reminds me to conclude'. We were reminded of the many letters, excellent and otherwise, in the novels.

In May, twenty-two South West Branch members enjoyed two days in Bath, following Jane Austen and her characters along the city's streets and crescents. Visits to the Museum of Bath Architecture and Beckford's Tower were led by the Curator, Dr Amy Frost, and the Assembly Rooms were opened for us by the staff of the National Trust. Penelope Byrde entertained us with 'A Round of the Utmost Diversion: Dress and Social Life in Jane Austen's Bath' at St Michael's Church in Broad Street on our second evening in the city.

The June meeting hosted a compelling talk by Dr Anne Toner of Trinity College, Cambridge on 'The Conversation Piece' in art and how such paintings relate to the inimitable dialogues in Jane Austen's novels. Dr Alison Daniell, our second speaker, drew on scandalous press reports to present a thrilling talk on the 'Divorce Panic' of the early nineteenth century.

Our final meeting of the year in October was addressed by two excellent

speakers, Dr Christine Kenyon Jones of King's College London and Richard Foster, Keeper of Collections and teacher of Art History at Winchester College. Dr Kenyon Jones revealed many unsuspected links between Lord Byron and Jane Austen – people they knew, places they visited, experiences they shared, albeit at different times – and speculated whether they might actually have met. Richard Foster provided a comprehensive history of Winchester College and the Austen and Knight families' connections with the school and the city, including, of course, Jane Austen's death in Mrs David's lodgings at 8 College Street.

Stephen Mahony

Southern Circle Group – end of an era

The Southern Circle decided in the autumn of 2024 that the group had run its course and that it should come to an end. Dwindling attendance at meetings and a lack of capacity to run the group were both factors in the decision. The group was formed in 1989, making 2024 its thirty-fifth year – a good innings.

The group met on Zoom for the final time in October 2024 and we raised a glass (or a cup of tea!) to ourselves and the many members over the years who helped to make the group a lively, friendly and informative entity. It wouldn't be the Southern Circle however if we didn't talk about Jane Austen and this time our topic was the clergy. Our other 2024 meeting was in the spring, when we were at Jane Austen's House in Chawton. There were two topics for that meeting: children and locations.

The special thing about the Southern Circle was the range of contributions that the same topic could engender and the enthusiasm with which people *did* contribute. We enjoyed our discussions enormously but we learned from them too. I'd like to thank all members, past and present, for making the Southern Circle such an enriching experience.

Fiona Ainsworth

Norah Hill (1835 - 1920)

Stephen Mahony

Image courtesy of Adam's Auctioneers, Dublin.

In October 2024 there was offered at auction[1] a portrait of Norah Hill painted in 1856 by John Joseph Slattery. Norah was the daughter of Cassandra Jane Knight (1806-1842), Edward Austen Knight's daughter, by her husband Lord George Hill (1801-1879), a younger son of the Marquess of Downshire.[2] Norah was, therefore, a great-niece of Jane Austen. She lived a life split between England and Ireland as her mother had done. The contrast between prosperous, peaceful Kent and poverty-stricken, troubled Donegal was very great. So, too, must have been the contrast between the grand balls at Dublin Castle and remote rural life in the west of Ireland.

Norah's portrait, painted in 1856, descended in the Hill family until the death of Richard Hill, 7th Baron Sandys in 2013. In 2023 it was sold on behalf of the Sandys Trust (a charity) at Christie's[3], where it fetched £378. Conserved and with the frame repaired, it was offered for sale in Dublin less than a year later with an estimate of €6,000-€8,000. It was unsold, despite having been written up in the journal of the Irish Georgian Society. Relatively little is known of the artist. A recent writer described him as 'utterly obscure . . . an artist whose career in Ireland was short, details of whose biography are scarce and whose work is extremely rare'. Slattery was a moderately successful portrait painter in Dublin who disappeared in 1858,[4] maybe to America. His portrait of Norah is mentioned in Strickland's *Irish Artists*.[5]

Lord George Hill, Norah's father, owned some 23,000 acres at Gweedore in Donegal, a remote agricultural community of perhaps 4,000 people, where he became a well-meaning, philanthropic, reforming but high-handed and sometimes ruthless landlord. He spoke Irish and worked to bring relief to his tenants during the Famine[6] but became very unpopular, not least for bringing Anglicanism to Gweedore. Norah must have grown up aware of the resulting tensions. The contrasts around her were stark.

The hotel at Gweedore built by Lord George and a typical cottage.

Cassandra had returned to England for her first confinements. She had three children at Godmersham (Norah was the first in 1835), but died in Ireland in 1842 after the birth of her fourth. Her sister Louisa went over to Ireland to look after the children and eventually married her brother-in-law in 1847. The ceremony was performed in Denmark, since marriage to a dead wife's sister was not permitted by law in England or Ireland.

Norah's childhood was mostly spent in Donegal, but she made a long visit to Godmersham in 1850. A cousin remarked that Norah was 'the prettiest as well as the nicest girl of 14 I ever saw . . . she always looks pretty and never thinks an instant about it'.[7] Her long thick hair in particular was much admired. Later, her cousin Edward Bridges Rice, sixteen years her senior, fell in love with her, proposed, but was rejected.[8]

Norah's portrait was painted in the Spring of 1856 when she was launched into Irish society. She was taken to the Lord Lieutenant's Drawing Room at Dublin Castle on 24 January by the Downshires and her stepmother Louisa, where she was presented. In the reports of the Viceroy Lord Carlisle's first ball of the season at Dublin Castle in February 'The Marchioness of Downshire and Miss Norah Hill' headed the list of guests published in all the newspapers.[9] The season ended with the St Patrick's Day Ball – held late that year because of Lent.

St Patrick's Day Ball, Dublin Castle, 1845. The ball Norah went to eleven years later must have been similar.

Jane Austen knew that she was 'read and admired in Ireland'.[10] It was still the case more than forty years later. At least one lady of the Lord Lieutenant's circle, Lady Campbell, a niece of the Duke of Leinster, was impressed by Louisa's and Norah's connection. She could repeat 'parts of every one of the books' and enjoyed long conversations with the Archbishop of Dublin – another enthusiast – about Jane Austen.[11]

On 26 April 1859 Norah married. The event was reported in many newspapers

under the heading ‘Marriage in High Life’:

At St. Peter’s Church, Dublin, by the Rev. Hamilton Verschoyle, Captain the Hon. Somerset Ward, fifth son of the late Viscount Bangor, of Castle Ward, county of Down, to Norah Mary Elizabeth Hill, eldest daughter of Lord George Hill, of Gweedore, county of Donegal.[12]

Somerset Ward (1833-1912) had fought in the Crimea and in India, and was a captain in the 65th Foot. He subsequently commanded the North Mayo Militia from which he retired in 1870. Later he was agent to his brother at Castle Ward.

In the album of Hill family photographs, discovered by Karen Ievers, there is a photograph of Norah and her husband taken shortly after their wedding. Norah seems a little older but no less beautiful. They went to live outside Strangford in County Down, near Castle Ward, but later moved to Birr in County Offaly.

Norah and Husband
Image courtesy of the Donegal County Archives.

On 15 April 1860 Norah gave birth to a daughter, Cassandra, who died at Birr in September 1862. Another daughter was born at Birr on 13 June 1861 and on 24 October 1862 she had a son, other boys being born on 14 August 1865 and 26 March 1868.

When Somerset retired as President of the Castlebar Young Men’s Christian and Literary Society in 1870, it was said of him

he had a mind highly educated, stored with useful, general and literary information, he was a good original and eloquent speaker, having a fine command of language, and consequently all the facilities for conveying in a clear, lucid and comprehensive style the

information which he had acquired. They all remembered his gentle demeanour, affability and courteousness of manner . . . his very able and lucid exposition of Scripture will not be forgotten.[13]

One wonders if 'comprehensive' was intended to be ambiguous.

In the 1880s as landlord and tenant relations deteriorated, Somerset, advising his usually absent brother-in-law Arthur Hill, who now owned the Gweedore estate, favoured strong action against tenants and attended evictions himself.

There is another photograph of Norah and Somerset taken about 1910 by Norah's daughter, Lady Dunleath. The pretty young face is now marked by her experiences of fifty turbulent years in Ireland, so far from the peace and tranquillity beloved of her great-aunt, Jane Austen.

Notes

1. Auction at Adam's, 15 October 2024, lot 514, oil on canvas 53 x 43.5 cm.
2. Sophia Hillan's excellent book *May, Lou and Cass, Jane Austen's Nieces in Ireland* (Blackstaff Press 2011) is the source for much of the biographical information that follows.
3. Sale at Christie's, 29 November 2023, lot 209.
4. William Laffan, 'Samuel Beckett, John Joseph Slattery and Jane Austen's Niece', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, the Journal of the Irish Georgian Society, vol. xxvi (2023) pp.90-98.
5. Walter Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 2 vols, (Dublin and London, 1913) vol. 2, p.359.
6. Hillan, p.170 onwards.
7. *Ibid*., p.147.
8. *Ibid*., p.165.
9. *Dublin Evening Mail,* 13 February 1856, for example.
10. Letter to Cassandra, 3 November 1813 in *Jane Austen's Letters*, Fourth Edition, collected and edited by Deirdre Le Faye, p.260.
11. Hillan, pp.160-161.
12. *Dublin Evening Mail*, 27 April 1859 and many other papers.
13. *Mayo Constitution*, 15 October 1870.

Letter from Jane Austen's Nephew in the Foundling Hospital Archive

Chris Jones

Coram's Foundling Hospital Archive contains a letter from James Edward Austen-Leigh, the nephew of Jane Austen. The Hospital contacted him in the summer of 1864 for information about two of his servants, the parents of an illegitimate child conceived while in his employment.

Bray Vicarage, 1861

Fanny Sarah Sharp and James Butchard met as servants at Bray Vicarage in Berkshire, the home of the Reverend James Edward Austen-Leigh (always known as Edward, 1798-1874). In 1853 he had left Scarlets, his home since 1837, to take up residence in Bray when he became vicar of St Michael's Church, a position he held until his death. From Bray, in 1870 and 1871, he published two editions of *A Memoir of Jane Austen*.

On census night in April 1861, Edward Austen-Leigh was at Bray Vicarage with his wife Emma, five of their ten children, and seven servants, but Fanny Sharp and James Butchard were not yet in post. Aged sixteen, Fanny was working in a country house outside Windsor as a kitchen maid for a wealthy widow. She originally came from Bray, where her father made hurdles. It is likely that James Butchard was the seventeen-year-old footman from Tilehurst, in service to a magistrate in Kingston Lisle, fifty miles west of Bray in South Oxfordshire. By October 1861, both Fanny and James Butchard were employed in these same roles at Bray Vicarage.

Fanny's account of events, 1863-64

Fanny was nineteen and unmarried when she gave birth to her daughter on 5 February 1864 in London. In June, she visited the Foundling Hospital to petition for the admission of her baby. She provided a statement about her situation, written down by a staff member, and signed a petition form in her own handwriting.

Her statement said that her physical relationship with Butchard had started in January 1863, although 'there was no courtship or promise of marriage'. She must have been distressed upon discovering she was pregnant, knowing the shame she was about to bring on herself, her family, and the Austen-Leighs, whose vicarage should have been the model of propriety.

It seems that Fanny decided not to tell anyone, not even Butchard ('not liking to do so'), and found instead a way to leave Bray. She successfully applied to become cook for the Reverend and Mrs Lingwood in Maidenhead, about two miles away. She arrived there in November, but had to leave six weeks later, 'not being able to do my work'.

Fanny then went to stay with her sister, Mrs Swan, in Paddington Green, London. She saw Butchard about two weeks before the birth, but her statement gives no details about this meeting. After she recovered from the birth, she began working as a cook for Captain and Mrs Harris of 17 Porchester Square, a good address in Bayswater. They would keep her on, she said, if the Foundling Hospital accepted her child.

Corroboration of her account

James Twiddy, the Foundling Hospital's investigator, then set about verifying her account. He visited Mrs Swan, Mrs Harris and Mrs Buckley, a clergyman's wife who had employed Mrs Swan for twelve years and who was acquainted with the Austen-Leighs. Twiddy wrote to the doctor who delivered the baby and Fanny's two previous employers.

Although living in London at this period, Mrs Buckley had known Fanny Sharp's family for many years and had 'always entertained a favourable opinion of the general character of the whole family'. She had been unaware of Fanny's condition until 5 February, when the two sisters were visiting her. Fanny 'was suddenly taken ill', whereupon a doctor was called and discovered she was in labour. Fanny returned to her sister's house, where she gave birth. The doctor wrote to Twiddy, 'I have no hesitation in saying that it was a first labor [sic]', indicating that Twiddy had asked about this.

Soon after the birth, Mrs Swan visited Edward Austen-Leigh to ask him to investigate the matter, but Butchard 'denied the paternity'. Mrs Buckley reported that the Austen-Leighs had seen nothing to suggest a relationship between Fanny and Butchard, but that the two of them had been allowed to stay up after the family had gone to bed. Mrs Buckley concluded, 'To this imprudent arrangement must be attributed the Evil which has now fallen upon [the] petitioner'.

She confirmed that Fanny was 'unable to maintain her child and her relatives are too poor to support it'. Wishing to help, because Fanny had been 'very penitent', Mrs Buckley had recommended her to Mrs Harris, who had taken her on as cook. Mrs Harris gave Twiddy a favourable report of Fanny's conduct in her household. In contrast, the Revd Thomas J Lingwood was not pleased at having been deceived. He and his wife had been surprised at the change in Fanny's appearance when she took up her position. She told them she was suffering from dropsy, 'and in this she persisted to the last'.

Edward Austen-Leigh's letter

For his part, Edward Austen-Leigh was under the impression that Fanny had left the Lingwoods 'because she was unsuited for it; but without any loss of character'. In his letter dated 8 June, he explained that Fanny had been 'known to me from childhood. She was of my parish & in my school; & was an intelligent & promising girl. We took great interest in her & she has received much friendship from my family.' Butchard had left the vicarage in April, but 'not in consequence of this charge'. Edward Austen-Leigh had known of Butchard's plans to go into a

different line of work, but did not know his current whereabouts.

The tone and content of Edward Austen-Leigh's letter are remarkable for their lack of moral judgement on Fanny. He attempts to present the facts of the case logically:

> The young woman constantly asserted that he was the father of her child: he as firmly denied it; & when she attempted to affiliate it on him, she was unable to bring forward any confirmatory circumstances & failed in the attempt.
> This is all that I can tell you. The affair has caused us much distress & perplexity; nor can we arrive at any conclusion which perfectly satisfies our judgment. There are some circumstances which seem to criminate & some which tend to exculpate him from the charge.

As vicar, Edward Austen-Leigh should have been the moral pillar of his community. This episode is likely to have caused him embarrassment, to say the least, because both the Lingwoods and the Buckleys knew of it. Unfortunately, the Hampshire Archives' run of Austen-Leigh diaries does not include those for 1863 and 1864, and so it is not possible to glean further insights.

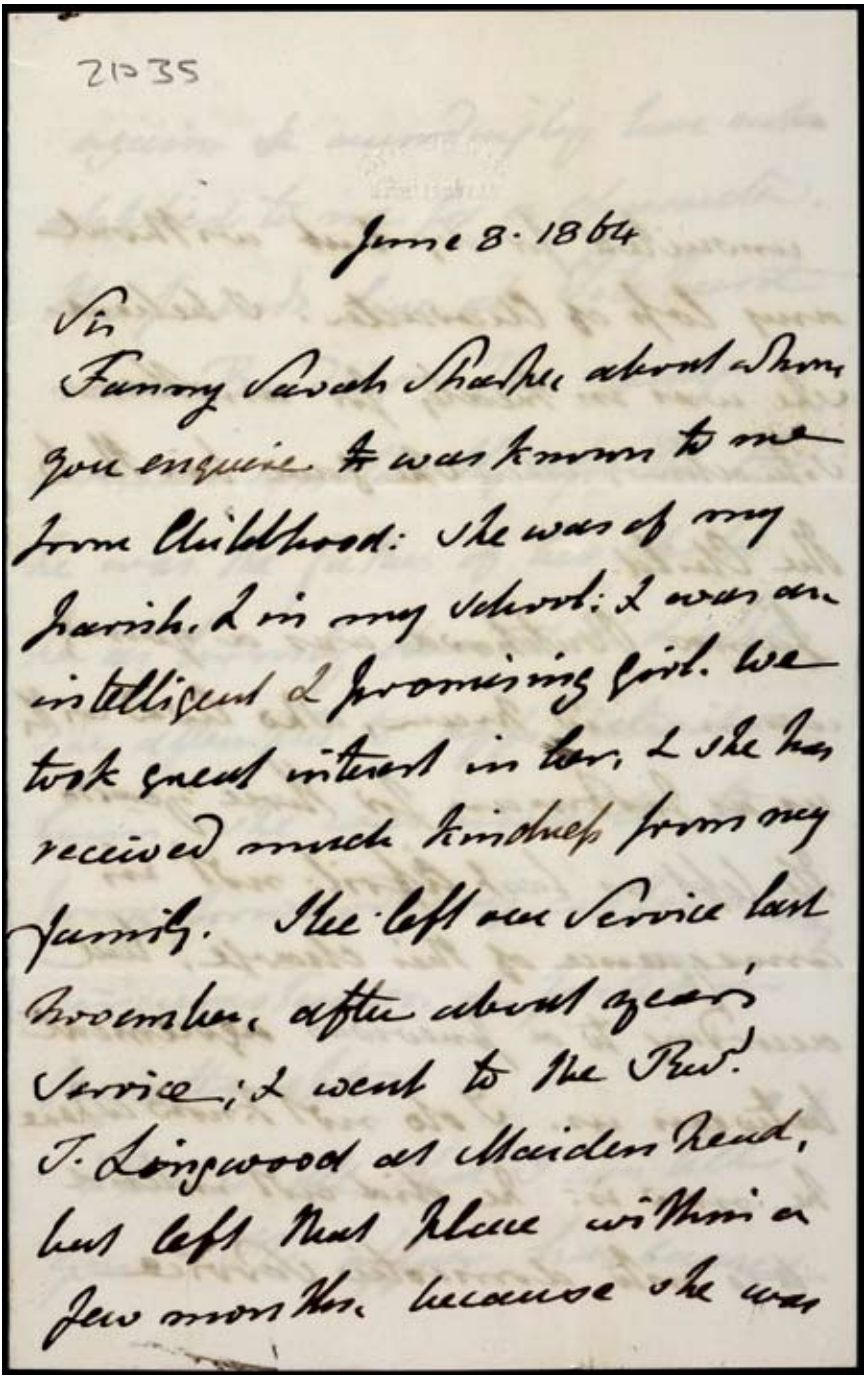
Subsequent events

On 14 June 1864, the Foundling Hospital admitted Fanny's daughter and gave her a new name, Mary Mead, and the number 21035. Mary was sent to a nurse in the countryside, where she died on 17 September, aged seven months. Five years later, on 5 December 1869, Fanny Sarah Sharp married Private Henry Pritchard of the Fusilier Guards. They went on to have three children, two girls and a boy. And on 16 December 1869, Austen-Leigh published the first edition of his memoir of his famous aunt. The original print run of *A Memoir of Jane Austen* – a thousand copies, dated 1870 – quickly sold out.

Notes

All quoted material is taken from the Foundling Hospital Archive: Petitions Admitted 1864, Bundle 73, Case 18: A/FH/A/08/001/002/073/018/a1-f4. Online here:
https://coramstory.org.uk/explore/content/blog/highlights-of-the-foundling-hospital-collection-letter-from-jane-austens-nephew/

The images of James Edward Austen-Leigh's letters are Copyright © Coram <https://coramstory.org.uk/> . Coram licenses the text of this article and the images of Austen-Leigh's letter under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0> (CC BY-NC).


21035

June 8. 1864

Sir

Fanny Sarah Sharpe about whom you enquire, was known to me from Childhood: She was of my Parish, & in my School: & was an intelligent & promising Girl. We took great interest in her, & She has received much kindness from my family. She left our Service last November, after about 2 years Service; & went to the Revd. J. Longwood at Maiden Head, but left that Place within a few months because she was

1. A/FH/A/08/001/002/073/018/e1

—

unsuited for it; but without
any loss of Character. I believe
she was in treaty for another
situation, when she gave birth to
the Child.

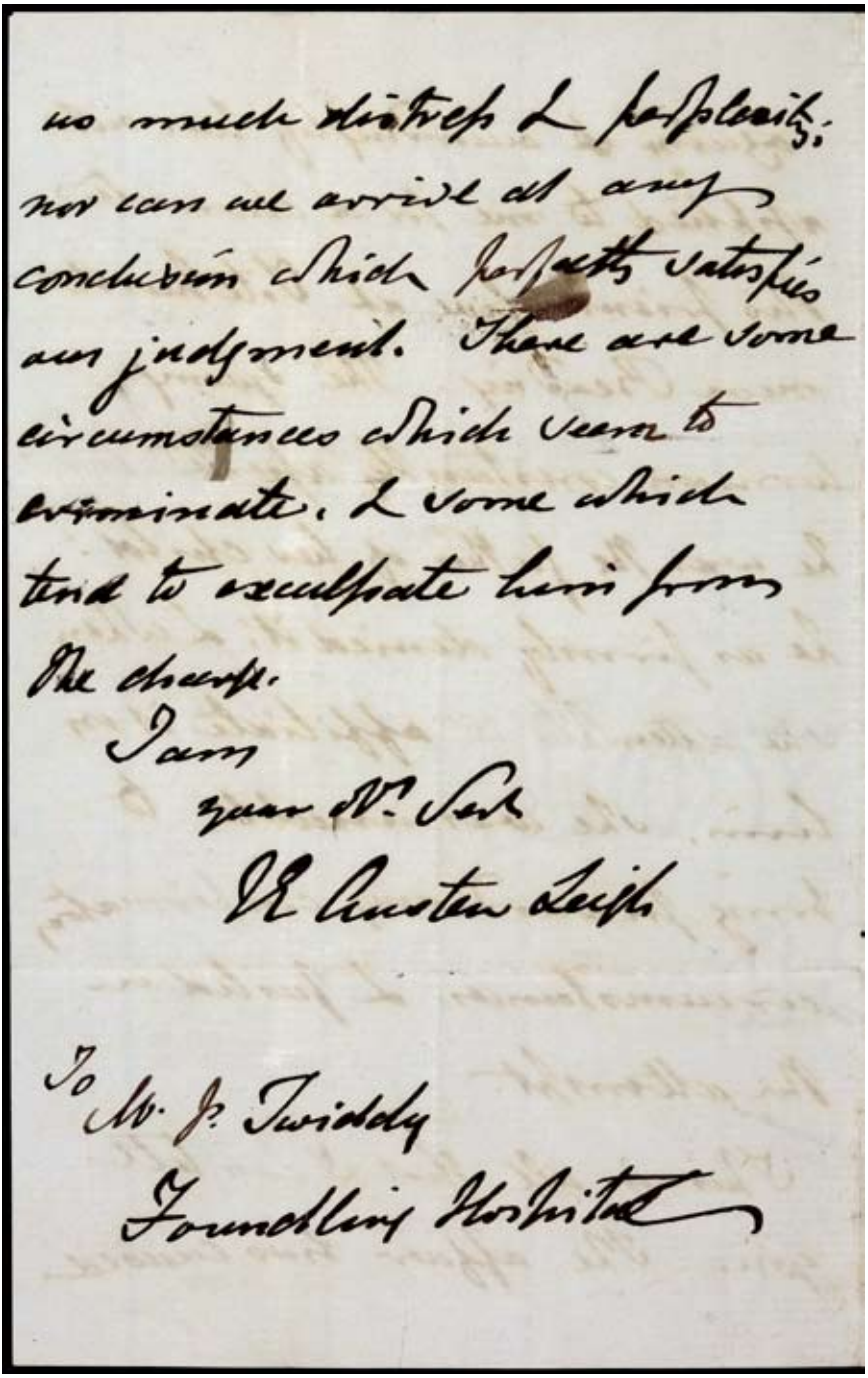
James Butchard was a young
unmarried man, who lived with
us as footman for three years.
He left us last April: not in
consequence of this charge; but
according to a previous agreement
between us. I do not know where
he now is: he did not intend
to go into domestic service

2. A/FH/A/08/001/002/073/018/e2

against L accordingly has not applied to me for a character. His friends live at Tolethurst near Reading. The young woman constantly asserted that he was the father of her child: he as firmly denied it: L when she attempted to affiliate it on him. she was unable to bring forward any confirmatory circumstances. L failed in the attempt.

This is all that I can tell you. The affair has caused

3. A/FH/A/08/001/002/073/018/e3



no much distress & perplexity
now can the arrival of any
conclusion which perfectly satisfies
our judgment. There are some
circumstances which seem to
exonerate, & some which
tend to exculpate him from
the charge.

I am
your Ob. Serv.
R Austen Leigh

To
Mr. J. Twisleton
Foundling Hospital

4. A/FH/A/08/001/002/073/018/e

'The Cruel Mrs Craven': A new assessment of the historical character behind an Austen family myth

Nicola Cornick

On the fringes of Jane Austen's family history is a character who appears to be such a pantomime villain that it is hard to believe she is not a complete fiction. 'The Cruel Mrs Craven' makes her debut in the *Reminiscences* of Caroline Austen, an annotated collection of memories from 1804 to 1874, which was instigated by Caroline's brother James Edward Austen-Leigh, who had an interest in creating a memoir of their aunt Jane Austen and her immediate family. Elizabeth Craven was Caroline and James Edward's great-grandmother. She was a peripheral figure to the Austen family, but nevertheless one who cast a long shadow: a domestic tyrant around whom a story of cruelty, child neglect and even debauchery was woven which developed over time and which, with the input of some Jane Austen scholars, became a full-blown myth of a monster.

Scholars of Craven family history may, however, uncover a different – or at least more nuanced – view of Elizabeth Craven in their researches. I first became curious about Elizabeth when carrying out research for a book I was writing about Ashdown House, the Craven family seat on the Berkshire Downs that was built in the 1660s. Ashdown, a few miles north of the village of Lambourn and some twenty miles from Newbury, was a hunting lodge that the Cravens used for sport, but it was also a 'spare' house where various members of the family would live when they needed a temporary, albeit grand, roof over their heads. The Hon. Charles Craven, Elizabeth's first husband and brother to the second Lord Craven, lived at Ashdown before his marriage and he and Elizabeth began their married life together there in 1719.

Ashdown House. National Trust.

Tracing the life of Elizabeth Craven (neé Staples) from birth to death, and also examining her connections to other local families such as the Raymonds of Kintbury, reveals a fascinating network of patronage and kinship. There are strong elements of the legend of 'the cruel Mrs Craven' in this history; the origins of the family lore are clear to see. However, appraising Elizabeth Craven afresh allows us to re-assess her in a broader historical context and also to correct some of the misconceptions about her that have flourished over time. As a result, a more realistic figure appears from the shadow of family myth.

Caroline Austen, author of the *Reminiscences,* was the great-granddaughter of the Hon. Charles Craven and his wife Elizabeth Staples. Their daughter Martha, who married the Revd Nowes Lloyd, was Caroline's grandmother and her mother, Mary Lloyd, was the second wife of the Revd James Austen, Jane Austen's eldest brother. Caroline was therefore a direct descendant of Charles and Elizabeth Craven as well as Jane Austen's niece. When relating aspects of her family history in the *Reminiscences*, Caroline explains that she has taken some of the information from her grandmother's notebooks and put it together with stories that were well known and discussed within the family. She states that this information was given to her without dates and freely admits that it was, as the title of the volume confirms, reminiscence rather than fact.

In the *Reminiscences,* Caroline writes:

> My grandmother, Martha Craven, and her sisters had a rough life of it. Their mother, a most courteous and fascinating woman in society, was of a stern, tyrannical temper and they were brought up in fear, not in love.[1]

Caroline goes on to describe how the girls were sometimes starved or forced to eat food that they hated, only receiving some kindness from the maids who secretly delivered bread and cheese to them after they had gone to bed. Mrs Craven would apparently leave her daughters to their own devices for months on end while she made social visits, often to a Mr Jemmett Raymond's house at Barton Court in Kintbury. She would habitually take one daughter with her to act as a maidservant.[2]

The *Reminiscences* go on to relate that Martha Craven resolved to leave home to escape her mother's wrath after one of her sisters eloped with a yeoman farmer and another with a horse dealer. While all this scandalous behaviour was taking place, the girls' father, Charles Craven, never intervened and was notable for his absence. Caroline comments: 'I do not hear that their father ever interfered – the family seemed to be left to her. I suppose he was very much away from home.'[3]

It is, in many respects, a remarkable and horrifying tale. A cruel and capricious woman inflicts misery on her daughters, starves them, possibly beats them and treats them as servants. When she is not mistreating them, she neglects them. Their father is indifferent, as he also appears to be to the fact that his wife spends a great deal of time staying with another man, Mr Jemmett Raymond. Two of the girls elope and a third, Martha, runs away rather than live another moment under

her mother's roof. Taken at face value, this litany of monstrous behaviour by one parent and neglect by the other is indeed shocking.

Later in the *Reminiscences* there is another reference to Elizabeth Craven that reinforces the view that she was wicked in the sense of neglecting her children's spiritual as well as their physical welfare. In 1817, Caroline's brother James Edward wished to apply for a Craven scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford. These scholarships had been established in the seventeenth century by John, Baron Craven of Ryton, and were by tradition awarded first to 'founder's kin' – any Craven descendants who could prove their familial relationship to the founder. However, there was a problem. Previously when another cousin, William Fowle, had applied for a scholarship, no one knew where the baptismal certificates for Charles Craven's children could be found. Caroline relates that 'some of the family professed to believe, that Mrs Craven having been a very bad mother, had never had her children christened at all'.[4] The implication is that Elizabeth Craven not only did not care for her children in life but also had no concern for their immortal souls.

This initial depiction of Elizabeth Craven in the *Reminiscences* was repeated in later works on Jane Austen's family history by descendants including William Austen-Leigh and Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh, thus cementing Elizabeth's bad reputation. To the already accepted family lore, Mary Augusta added that: 'Mrs. ——, (Craven) when afterwards left a widow, married a gentleman of good property, with whom she had long been well acquainted.'[5]

While Mary Augusta does not mention the name of either party, the gentleman in question was the Mr Jemmett Raymond whose house at Barton Court in Kintbury Elizabeth Craven had allegedly visited frequently during her first marriage. To many later commentators the implication was clear: not only was Elizabeth Craven a cruel and unnatural mother, she was also an immoral fortune-hunter.

The Unreliable Nature of Reminiscence

Before we look at the historical accuracy of the claims against Elizabeth Craven it is important to consider their source. The dictionary definition of the word 'reminiscence' is: 'the act of recalling or narrating past experiences.'[6] Reminiscence depends explicitly on memory; one would not expect a set of reminiscences to reflect complete historical accuracy as they are a record not of fact but of recollection and as Queen Elizabeth II once so memorably stated, 'Recollections may vary'.[7] When Caroline was writing her *Reminiscences* in the 1870s, Mrs Craven had been dead for a hundred years. Caroline, born in 1805, had never known her, and in fact her grandmother Martha Craven, whose notebooks Caroline drew on for family history, had also died in the year of Caroline's birth. This information was very much second hand.

What seems clear, however, is that the tales of Mrs Craven's behaviour were well-known family stories that had been passed down through the generations. Possibly there had been some distortion of the truth in this process, as there often

can be with family anecdotes, some embellishments and equally some details that had fallen by the wayside.

The incident of the missing baptismal certificates, mentioned above, illustrates how easy it is for some elements of family history to be forgotten. As we have seen, apparently neither the Fowle nor the Austen families were able to locate the birth records of Martha and Jane Craven in order to support the applications of William Fowle or James Edward Austen-Leigh respectively for Craven scholarships in the early nineteenth century. However, according to Caroline, years later, her brother discovered the baptismal records of their grandmother and some of the other Craven children at St Egwin's church in Norton and Lenchwick.[8] Since Lenchwick was where Mr and Mrs Craven were living when a number of their children were born, it is logical that they would have been baptised at the church of St Egwin. Yet it seems that by 1817, when James Edward Austen-Leigh was applying to Oxford, family members had either forgotten where Charles and Elizabeth Craven had lived, or they had never known.

In the *Reminiscences*, Caroline herself acknowledges that these anecdotes about her great-grandparents are over a century old, and that memory can be unreliable: 'Perhaps some of the traditions of Mrs Craven's personal cruelty to her children, as endangering even their lives, went beyond the truth.'[9] The implication here is that one can't believe everything that one is told, but at the same time, a family story often contains elements of truth. It is in this light that the *Reminiscences* should be read and their contents examined. What seems curious is that while many other elements of Jane Austen's story have been pored over and their historical roots evaluated, so much of the depiction of Elizabeth Craven has been taken at face value.

Elizabeth Craven as Lady Susan?

Much of the attention that has been drawn to Elizabeth Craven by Jane Austen scholars has come about through discussions of whether or not she was the inspiration for the character of Lady Susan Vernon in Jane Austen's novella *Lady Susan*. While this article does not look at that specific debate, it is important to note the influence that it has had on the historical reputation of Elizabeth Craven. With very few exceptions, those commentators who have written about her have tended to draw on the original and hostile narratives of her life and have added speculation of their own. A welcome exception is Judith Stove, who introduced some information on the Kintbury charities of which Elizabeth and her second husband were patrons, as part of an article in 2021.[10] Overall, however, the discussion over the inspiration for *Lady Susan* has reinforced and extended the pre-existing claims against Elizabeth Craven. Collateral damage has also been caused to the historical figures of the Hon. Charles Craven and Jemmett Raymond. In her notes on the *Reminiscences*, Deirdre Le Faye felt that Charles Craven's apparent absence from his daughters' lives required explanation and the suggestions she put forward were damning.[11] Other writers have observed that Jemmett Raymond was 'besotted' with Elizabeth Craven.[12]

It is important to note that whether or not one believes Elizabeth Craven to be the inspiration for Lady Susan Vernon, it is essentially the Elizabeth Craven of the *Reminiscences* whom scholars are debating, a creation that is a composite of fact, memory and imagination. The historical Elizabeth Craven was someone whose actions and behaviours need to be considered in a wider context than the lens originally provided by the *Reminiscences* and the accretion of speculation that followed.

The Historical Elizabeth Craven

Elizabeth was the youngest daughter of Colonel John Staples and his second wife, Elizabeth Skylling. She was born in Thatcham in Berkshire, and christened on 3 October 1697, according to her baptismal record.[13] Her father had a long and distinguished career in the army, serving in the Royal Horse Guards and later the Grenadier Guards during the reigns of King Charles II, King James II and William and Mary.[14] It is likely that it was through this army service that John Staples developed a social network that included the 1st Earl of Craven, who was Colonel of the Coldstream Guards until 1688, and Sir Jemmett Raymond, who served in the Royal Artillery Company.

By the time Elizabeth was born in 1697, her father already had a grown-up family from his first marriage. After his first wife's death, he had remarried in 1689. Elizabeth Skylling, his second wife, was a widow with two children of her own. Her first husband, Henry Skylling, had been a Wiltshire gentleman and landowner and she was the daughter of another gentleman, John Howes of Greenham in Berkshire, another estate that was close to Kintbury.[15]

John Staples and Elizabeth Skylling had two daughters, Jane born in 1686 and Elizabeth born the following year. Despite the fact that he was in his fifties, John Staples continued to pursue his army career until he was severely injured at the Battle of Steenkerque in 1692, during the Nine Years War. There is no record of his army career continuing after this date but the Westminster Rate Books from the 1670s through to 1716 show him owning property at various addresses in Westminster.[16]

The second Mrs Staples died in 1706 when her daughters Jane and Elizabeth were ten and nine years old respectively, leaving them in the care of their sixty-nine-year-old father. Fortunately, there was another female relative who was willing and able to take the girls under her wing, their half-sister Elizabeth Skylling Raymond. Elizabeth was the elder child of Mrs Staples' first marriage to Henry Skylling of Draycott Fitzpaine. In 1703 she had married as his second wife, Sir Jemmett Raymond of Barton Court, Kintbury in Berkshire.[17] This Elizabeth was fifteen years older than her half-sister with the same name.

The Raymonds were another family like the Cravens who had made a fortune in trade in London in the seventeenth century and used their money to buy land. Sir Jonathan Raymond, Sir Jemmett's father, had inherited Barton Court at Kintbury in Berkshire from his father-in-law in 1678. Sir Jemmett was his eldest son and his first wife had been a great heiress. When she died in childbirth at the

age of seventeen, her husband inherited the estate of Wolverton in Hampshire, which would in time be passed to their only son, also called Jemmett. Meanwhile, Jemmett senior re-married and had a further seven children.

In 1711 on the death of Sir Jonathan Raymond, Sir Jemmett and Lady Raymond moved to Barton Court. The household consisted not only of their growing family, but also Jemmett, the son of Sir Jemmett's first marriage, Henry Skylling, Lady Raymond's brother, and on occasion, her half-sisters Jane and Elizabeth Staples. Studying the marriage records of the Raymond, Skylling and Staples families suggests a close relationship between this network of relatives.[18]

In this context, Elizabeth Craven's frequent visits as an adult to Barton Court to visit her half-sister and brother-in-law make perfect sense. Sir Jemmett Raymond was reputed to keep a convivial household and one imagines that Jane Willoughby and her family, Henry Skylling, and many other relatives and old friends were also welcome there. The *Reminiscences* tell us that Elizabeth Craven would habitually take one of her daughters with her on these trips: 'She was accustomed to take one of her daughters with her when she went from home – to wait upon her, as was said.'[19] Another interpretation would be that Elizabeth was taking one or other of her daughters with her to visit their cousins. It seems odd, if not impossible, that any ill treatment of the daughters on these visits would not be remarked upon by the other family members since it could scarcely escape their notice.

The complicated tangle of family relationships at Barton Court appears not to have been known to any Jane Austen scholars, who understandably found it suggestive that Elizabeth Craven would apparently spend so much time at a place the *Reminiscences* refer to as 'Mr Raymond's'.[20] Here the *Reminiscences* also mislead the reader by conflating Mr Jemmett Raymond, Elizabeth Craven's second husband, with his father *Sir* Jemmett Raymond. It was Sir Jemmett and Lady Raymond who were living at Barton Court when Elizabeth Craven and her daughters were visiting. Mr Jemmett Raymond was resident at Wolverton, the Hampshire estate he had inherited from his mother's family. He did not inherit Barton Court until 1754.

Thus, we can see how Elizabeth Craven's family visits to Barton Court have taken on the appearance of something far more suspect – illicit trysts with the man who was to become her second husband. The suggestions that she spent a great deal of time at Barton, that she took one of her daughters with her to act as a servant during these improper visits to a gentleman's house, that he was a wealthy landowner and that she married him after her first husband died, have all contributed to the interpretation of Elizabeth as a fortune-hunting adulteress when there is in fact no evidence at all of any impropriety between her and Mr Jemmett Raymond. Context is all, and the frequency and length of Elizabeth stays at Kintbury are entirely explicable when viewed in the context of visits to her half-sister's family.

Charles Craven

The marriage to a younger brother of the 2nd Lord Craven, uncle to the current baron, was a significant coup for Elizabeth Staples in social terms. Charles Craven was a member of the aristocracy, albeit a minor one. An alliance with him was a step up from Elizabeth Skylling's marriage to Sir Jemmett Raymond or that of Jane Staples to George Willoughby. The marriage was to bring significant benefits of patronage to members of the Fowle, Austen and Lloyd families for over a century.

If Elizabeth Craven has suffered from a hostile narrative, then Charles Craven has also been given short shrift in the notes on the *Reminiscences* where he is described as 'openly dishonest' in his financial affairs and there is the suggestion that involvement in a court case left him in social disgrace, or alternatively, that he might have been physically or mentally incapacitated.[21] There is in fact no historical evidence to support any of these charges.

Educated at Rugby School, Charles Craven was first Secretary to the Lords Proprietor of Carolina and then appointed Governor of Carolina in 1711. His elder brother, the 2nd Lord Craven, was one of the Proprietors although he died in October 1711, before Charles set sail for Charlestown. Charles's period as Governor was a challenging one. On the one hand, his leadership and courage in the Yamasee War of 1715 was praised and he had helped to finance it from his own fortune. He was considered an able administrator and his policy of religious tolerance was widely respected.[22] However, he suffered from the in-fighting among the factions in the Carolina government and on a wider scale he was drawn into the complex political and diplomatic games that were playing out across Europe and the colonies. A long-running lawsuit between Craven and the Spanish Marquis of Navares and later his executors, was a product of this hostility between the Spanish and British colonial empires.[23]

Having returned to England in 1716 to attend to various legal matters around the inheritance of his nephew the 3rd Lord Craven, Charles Craven did what many men of his age and class chose to do: he married, had a family and divided his time between London and his country estates. A series of lawsuits indicate that, as the senior surviving member of the Craven family, he was active in defending the family's interests in a number of complex land and financial disputes.[24]

Craven Family Life

In 1721 Charles and Elizabeth's first child, a daughter named Elizabeth, was baptised in London. Charles owned property in Westminster and was later to buy a house in the newly-developed part of Cavendish Square. The couple's two subsequent children, Margaret and Charles, were also baptised at Westminster, although by 1722, the Cravens had moved to another family estate at Norton and Lenchwick in Worcestershire. Charles was appointed High Sheriff of that county in 1724.[25]

The sisters Martha, Jane and Mary Craven were all born at Lenchwick and baptised at the church in Norton. A second son, Robert, and a third, John, were

also born and baptised there. Finally, a daughter, Penelope, was born in 1732 in London. Both Robert and Penelope died very young and a third tragedy occurred when the eldest boy, Charles, died at about the age of ten. Of the nine children of Charles and Elizabeth Craven, one boy and five girls survived into adulthood.

By 1735, the family had moved to Brockhampton Park at Sevenhampton in Gloucestershire. They were now living considerably further from Elizabeth's family in Berkshire and Wiltshire, although Lord Craven held substantial Gloucestershire estates. Visits from Brockhampton Park to Kintbury would, inevitably, require more travelling and lead to longer periods of time away from home. Meanwhile, the Craven children were raised and educated largely by a series of nurses, governesses and tutors, as was the convention at the time. John Craven, the son and heir, was sent away to school; the girls were educated at home.

In 1736, Charles Craven was called to London to consult with the Government on the drawing of a border between North and South Carolina. It was widely reported that he would be re-appointed Governor of South Carolina in 1736, but this came to nothing and he continued to divide his time between family matters in London and the country.[26] Towards the end of his life, he is recorded as living at Brockhampton and taking an active interest in the running of the Craven Gloucestershire estates and farms.[27]

In 1743, Elizabeth, the eldest of the Cravens' daughters, married at the age of twenty-two. Her husband was William Cox, who had inherited a small estate at Apperley in Deerhurst, Gloucestershire, about fifteen miles from Sevenhampton. It was a respectable if not a dazzling match. It also took place in the city of Gloucester rather than locally and was witnessed by an innkeeper, suggesting that it might have been an elopement.[28] This, however, is not reflected in the *Reminiscences* where William is referred to as 'a Squire Cox, of good degree'.[29]

It was not until 1751 that the next daughter, Margaret Craven, married John Hincksman, a yeoman farmer from Sevenhampton. This is one of the marriages referred to in the *Reminiscences* as being a *mesalliance* and an elopement that took place while Elizabeth Craven was absent in Berkshire. There is no evidence to doubt the *Reminiscences* on this. Like her elder sister, Elizabeth, Margaret married in the city of Gloucester.[30] John Hinksman's estate and situation was in fact very similar to that of William Cox, but there was one crucial difference: William's father had been a gentleman, while the Hincksmans, as yeomen, were below the rank of the gentry. Margaret had most definitely married beneath her. Notwithstanding this, in 1828 when Margaret Hincksman's son died without heirs, he left a considerable fortune to his seven surviving cousins. One might agree therefore with Caroline Austen in the *Reminiscences* that 'the Hinxman (sic) marriage turned out not so very bad' for the family.[31]

Endings and New Beginnings

The year 1754 was a particularly bad one for the extended Craven and Raymond families. Elizabeth, Lady Raymond, half-sister to Elizabeth Craven, died in June

of that year. Her husband Sir Jemmett died in December. All their children with the exception of Jemmett from the first marriage and Elizabeth, the daughter of the second, had pre-deceased them.

Henry Skylling, Elizabeth Craven's half-brother, had died in 1753, Jane Willoughby's husband George a couple of years before. Finally, in December 1754, Charles Craven died. He was buried at Speen, near Newbury, a week before Sir Jemmett Raymond was buried a few miles away at Kintbury. Their deaths were listed consecutively in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1755.[32]

Mr Jemmett Raymond inherited Barton Court and moved there from Wolverton in Hampshire. Elizabeth Craven, meanwhile, retained the lease on Brockhampton Court in Gloucestershire. Perhaps prompted by the death of his father, and his accession to his inheritance, Mr Jemmett Raymond made his will in June 1755 at Wolverton. His executor was Elizabeth Craven, to whom he was, of course, related by marriage and whom he had known for over forty years. He made generous provision for her, leaving her various land and tenements in Middlesex, Berkshire and Southampton for her lifetime, all his shares in the Chelsea Waterworks, and plate and furnishings from various properties. However, there was no suggestion that any of these properties would pass out of the Raymond family in the long term. Jemmett Raymond's will was clear that after Elizabeth's death, the estates were to be split between his sister Elizabeth Raymond and his cousin Dame Elizabeth Miller. Elizabeth Craven's daughter Jane was a witness to the will.[33]

No change was made to this will after the marriage of Jemmett Raymond and Elizabeth Craven in October 1755, although a codicil of 1756 recorded the marriage and also that Dame Elizabeth Miller had died and so her daughter Dame Elizabeth Worsley would inherit her share.[34] Some scholars have commented on the 'unseemly haste' with which Jemmett Raymond and Elizabeth Craven married, seeing it as further evidence of a pre-existing romantic relationship. In fact, in the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for both widows and widowers to remarry within nine months.[35]

In September 1756 the Revd John Craven, the only surviving son of Charles and Elizabeth Craven, married Elizabeth Raymond, Jemmett's half-sister. John was twenty-four and had just graduated from Oxford.[36] Elizabeth Raymond was thirty-eight and according to the *Reminiscences* 'had a good fortune with more in prospect; but she was a young woman of weak intellect to whom some companion or guide was almost necessary'.[37] It has been assumed by a number of scholars that John and Elizabeth were bullied into the match by Elizabeth in her guise of an overbearing and financially-grasping mother. However, the role of Jemmett Raymond in his sister's marriage can hardly be ignored; he was the head of the family and, most significantly, he held the purse strings. Documents from the period show him active in managing his sister Elizabeth's fortune and making sure that at all points her interests were protected.[38]

The Revd John Craven (1780, artist unknown).

Mrs John Craven (1780, artist unknown).

With the marriage of Elizabeth Craven to Jemmett Raymond and John Craven to Elizabeth Raymond, the inheritance from the four already-connected families – Howes, Skylling, Craven and Raymond – was consolidated. It was a pragmatic plan to unite all the family assets, gained through marriage, inheritance and business, and had John Craven and Elizabeth Raymond had any children, they would have inherited a considerable estate. In the event, the couple were childless, but, contrary to the reference to Elizabeth in the *Reminiscences* – 'She did not herself live very long'– [39] they were married for twenty-eight years and Elizabeth outlived her mother-in-law by seven years. John Craven remarried a few years after his first wife's death and produced four children, including two sons to perpetuate the family name and a daughter Charlotte Elizabeth who, along with her mother Catherine, was known to Jane Austen and mentioned a number of times in her letters.

What of the remaining daughters of Charles and Elizabeth Craven? In 1756 there were still three of them unmarried, including Mary Craven who was mentioned in the *Reminiscences* as making a match described as 'deplorable'.[40] 'A friend of his (John Hinxman) Mr Bishop, a horse dealer, as I have heard, with no money and no character, prevailed on another daughter Mary, to marry him.'[41]

In the *Reminiscences,* the story of Mary's marriage follows on directly after that of Margaret, giving the impression that the Hincksman and Bishop elopements occurred simultaneously, or close together. It may be that Caroline Austen and her relatives believed that this was what had happened. In fact, they took place five years apart. It was not a good match for Mary, who was widowed in 1769 with a young daughter and very little money.

When Elizabeth Raymond died in 1771, she left legacies to all her children in her will. Her remaining daughters, Martha and Jane, had married the Revd Nowes Lloyd, vicar of the villages of Bishopstone and Hinton Parva, and the Revd Thomas Fowle, vicar of Kintbury respectively, and lived nearby. Along with Mrs John Craven, they inherited items of Elizabeth's jewellery. Elizabeth Cox, Margaret Hincksman and Mary Bishop inherited a share in the family linen embroidered with their parents' initials. All the daughters received an equal share in their mother's investments.[42] Mr Jemmett Raymond had pre-deceased his wife by four years. After his wife, his sister was his major beneficiary and he took care to make provision for other members of the extended Raymond family.

Set In Stone

On the east wall in the church at Kintbury there are two marble pyramidal monuments surmounted by a bracketed cornice with busts in classical Roman style flanking an urn and hanging drapery. One was designed by the Flemish sculptor Peter Scheemakers and the other by his son Thomas.[43] The first is a monument to Sir Jemmett Raymond who is flanked by his two wives, Elizabeth Browne and Elizabeth Skylling. The second monument is to his son Jemmett and his wife Elizabeth. While a number of observers have commented with some accuracy

on how severe Elizabeth Craven Raymond looks in the sculpture, this criticism might fairly be applied to all the subjects, with perhaps the exception of Elizabeth Browne, who died at the age of only seventeen. Both Jemmett senior and his son strike the pose of Roman emperors. Their spouses look equally austere. A keen eye might also discern a family resemblance between Elizabeth Skylling and her half-sister, Elizabeth Craven.

Two Lives

Elizabeth Staples, 'The Cruel Mrs Craven' has, by a curious twist of literary fate, lived two parallel lives. The first was an historical one as the youngest daughter of Col John Staples, the wife of the Hon. Charles Craven and secondly of Mr Jemmett Raymond of Barton Court. In this life she was largely defined by her status with regard to her father and her two husbands, as many women of her era and class were. We do not hear her voice directly other than in her will.

This Elizabeth Craven was not remembered fondly by her descendants, who told a number of stories about her cruelty and neglect towards her daughters which passed into family folklore. Like many family anecdotes we may assume that these held more than a kernel of truth in them, but were also likely to have been embroidered over time, as Caroline Austen states. These are the stories that appear in the *Reminiscences* and it is from these various anecdotes that a second Elizabeth Craven emerged over time, the monstrous domestic tyrant and amoral fortune-hunter whose legend lives on because of a distant connection to Jane Austen. In this version, Elizabeth is the dominant character and all the men in her story are mysteriously unable or unwilling to stand up to her. In a reversal of the natural order of the time, they are the ones with no agency. Charles Craven is enfeebled, Jemmett Raymond manipulated. Even Elizabeth's son the Revd John Craven is apparently incapable of preventing his mother from marrying him off. They are all completely emasculated by this unnatural female whose cruelty to her daughters proves that she is a monster of control.

As we have seen, there are other, more realistic, interpretations for much of Elizabeth Craven's behaviour. The facts strongly suggest that she was close to her relatives and that her frequent stays at Barton Court, for example, were to see her half-sister's family. There is no reason to suspect her of any extra-marital relationship with Mr Jemmett Raymond. She and Charles Craven brought their children up in the distant manner familiar to so many members of the aristocracy in that period. After Charles's death, Elizabeth remarried within a perfectly acceptable timescale, and the two Craven/Raymond marriages were a pragmatic way to consolidate the family's landholdings.

However, the charges of cruelty and unkindness made against Elizabeth Craven cannot be refuted at this stage and it is unlikely they were fabricated in their entirety. Nor should they be dismissed. Three of her daughters eloped. A fourth ran away from home. Elizabeth's will shows marked favouritism towards some of her children over others. She was, like most people, a complex character and far from one-dimensional.

It is important to remember that when we talk about 'The Cruel Mrs Craven', the potential inspiration for the fictional character of Lady Susan Vernon, we are looking at a figure that derives from memory, not fact. 'The Cruel Mrs Craven' is an accretion of, in the words of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'mythology and the lore surrounding Jane Austen'.[44] The real Elizabeth Craven was no less interesting, but a quite different person.

The Craven Coat of Arms

Notes

1. *Reminiscences of Caroline Austen*. The Jane Austen Society, 1986, pp.7-8.
2. *Ibid*., p.8.
3. *Ibid*., p.9.
4. *Ibid*., p.49.
5. Austen-Leigh, Mary Augusta. *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen*. New York: Dutton, 1920.
6. *Collins Concise Dictionary*, William Collins Sons & Co Ltd Glasgow 1988.
7. A public statement issued by Queen Elizabeth II in March 2021.
8. *Reminiscences*, p.50.
9. *Ibid*., p.8.
10. Stove, Judith. '"The Cruel Mrs. Craven": Forced Confinement, Family Tradition, and Lady Susan'. JASNA *Persuasions*, 2021.
11. *Reminiscences*, pp.71-2.

12. '"A Rebel Revd": Kintbury and Beyond', 25 May 2023. https://kintburyandbeyond.co.uk/2023/05/25/a-rebel-revd/ Accessed 3 March 2025.
13. Ancestry.com. *England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. 2008; Record of Elizabeth Staples accessed 17 February 2025.
14. Charles Dalton (ed.). *English Army Lists and Commission Registers 1661 – 1714*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1892.
15. *Marriage Licences at the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury at London 1680*. Society of Antiquaries Library, London, March 10, 1887, p.152.
16. *England, Middlesex, Westminster Rate Books, 1634-1900*. Database with images. From database by Findmypast. 185 Fleet Street, London, England, EC4A 2HS. Citing Westminster City Archives, London.
17. Ancestry.com *England, Select Marriages, 1538 – 1973* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. 2008. Also: *Marriages at Huish 1684 – 1812,* Wiltshire Marriages Index 1538 – 1933 and Findmypast. *Sarum Marriage Licence bonds 1604 – 1837* Wiltshire Family History Society accessed 17 February 2025.
18. The closeness of the ties of friendship between the Skylling, Raymond, Staples and Craven families is demonstrated through various wedding arrangements: Elizabeth Skylling was married from Col and Mrs Staples house in London in 1703 when she wed Sir Jemmett Raymond. Jane Staples was staying at one of her half-brother Henry Skylling's manors at Wilcot in Wiltshire when she was preparing to marry George Willoughby in 1717. Elizabeth Staples was living with her and acted as bondswoman for her sister's marriage. Mr Jemmett Raymond was Charles Craven's bondsman when he and Elizabeth Staples married in 1719; Elizabeth married from Barton Court and she and Charles Craven married in the church at Kintbury. All records available from the database by Findmypast. 185 Fleet Street, London, England, EC4A 2HS.
19. *Reminiscences*, p.8.
20 *Ibid*.
21. *Ibid*., pp.71-2, Note 10.
22. Alexander Moore, *Craven Charles (1682 – 1754),* Oxford *Dictionary of National Biography* 08 August 2024 https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnd/68526. Accessed 17 February 2025.
23. BHO British History Online: *Calendar of State Papers, Treasury Papers and Journals of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations*.
24. Discover The National Archives: Craven Family Papers.
25. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: George I*. Originally published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1898.
26. *Stamford Mercury* and other newspapers, Thursday 6 May 1736. The British Newspaper Archive, DC Thomson, 1st Floor, Meadowside Building, Dundee, DD1 1DD.
27. Walter Lawrence, *Boock of & at Sevenhampton*, dating from 1737: 'December

ye 16th 1749 then Bought of Goufener Craven 1 Waging (wagon) at £5=5s=0d', referenced in a *History of Brockhampton Park* by David Cuin and Giles Browne https://www.brockhamptonpark.com/a-history-of-brockhampton-park-2/ accessed 17 February 2025.

28. Gloucestershire Archives Client Papers: *Craven: Sales papers, abstracts, copy deeds and correspondence concerning Speen Hill (Berks). 1755 – 1844*. Item 5 D1388/box9424/3.
29. *Reminiscences*, p.7.
30. Gloucestershire Archives Client Papers: *Craven: Sales papers, abstracts, copy deeds and correspondence concerning Speen Hill (Berks). 1755 – 1844*. Item 10 D1388/box9424/3.
30. *Reminiscences*, p.8.
31. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, volume 24. For the year 1754.
32. Boddington, Reginald Stewart, *1841 Genealogical Memoranda relating to the family of Raymond of Kintbury Berkshire*. Library of Congress online.
33. *https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/gdclccn.86114278* p.7. Accessed 18 February 2025
34. *Ibid*., p.8.
35. University of Michigan. 'Widows in 18th Century England', undated. *https://public.websites.umich.edu/* Accessed 3 March 2025.
36. Foster, Joseph. *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886*. Oxford: Parker and Co., 1888-1892, Vol 1 C, p.314.
37. *Reminiscences*, p.9.
38. Boddington, Reginald Stewart, *1841 Genealogical Memoranda relating to the family of Raymond of Kintbury Berkshire*. Library of Congress online. *https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/gdclccn.86114278* p.7. Accessed 18 February 2025.
39. *Reminiscences*, p.9.
40. *Ibid*., p.8.
41. *Ibid*.
42. Will of Elizabeth Raymond, Widow of Kintbury Berkshire, in the National Archives Catalogue Probate records of the prerogative court of Canterbury Ref: PROB 11/967/387, National Archives, Kew.
43. Bradley, S, Pevsner, N, Tyack, G, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire*, 2010, p.347.
44. Alexander Moore, Craven Charles (1682-1754), 8 August 2024. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnd/68526 Accessed 17 February 2025.

'Magnesia' – A Possible Book Citation in Jane Austen's Letters?

Deborah Barnum

In doing some research last year on Jane Austen's reading, I discovered a reference that might be something new in Austen scholarship. I am always surprised to see how often fresh things surface: books or letters showing up at auctions or in a bookseller's catalogue not seen before, such as the Chris Hammond illustrations for *Sense and Sensibility* that appeared out of someone's attic a few years ago. We can only *hope* for a new Jane Austen letter or two to be found. *That* would be worthy of a clarion trumpet call, whereas *this* discovery is small in comparison, but nevertheless worthy of note.

My source is Deirdre Le Faye, without whose research and knowledge we would not have the in-depth detail of Austen's life and writings that we do. In Le Faye's edited fourth edition of Austen's letters, we find a letter written from the Leigh Perrot's address at 1 Paragon in Bath to Cassandra at Kintbury Rectory, where she is staying with the Fowle family. Dated 21-22 May 1801, Jane writes the following:

M^r^ Bent seems bent upon being very detestable, for he values the books at only 70£. The whole World is in a conspiracy to enrich one part of our family at the expense of another. —Ten shillings for Dodsley's Poems however please me to the quick, & I do not care how often I sell them for as much. When M^rs^ Bramston has read them through I will sell them again.—I suppose You can hear nothing of your Magnesia.[1]

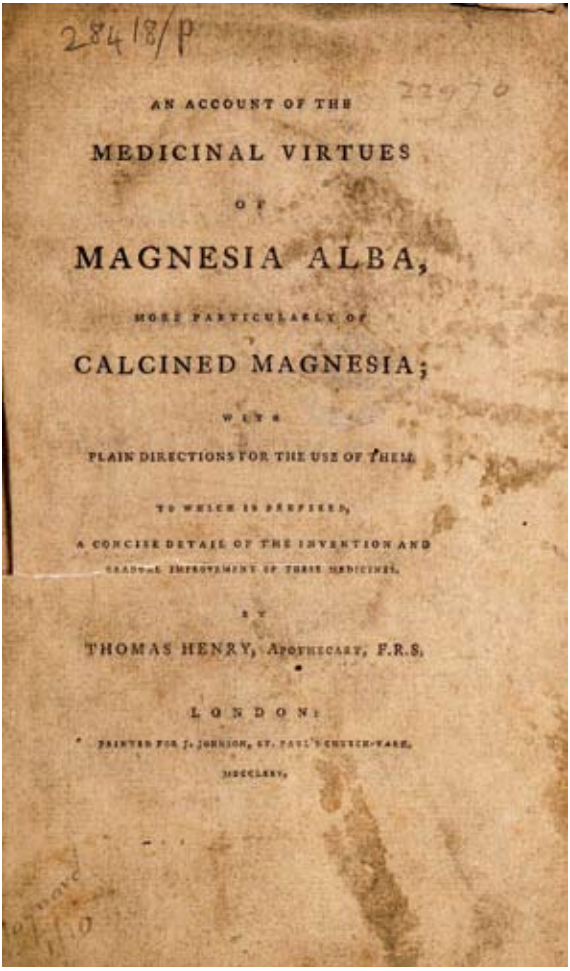
Le Faye annotates this passage as follows:

1. Robert Dodsley (1703-64). *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes by Several Hands* (1758).[2]
2. 'your Magnesia'**:** Hydrated magnesium carbonate, a white powder used medicinally as an antacid and laxative; perhaps CEA had ordered some medicine containing magnesium which had not yet arrived, or else which had been left behind when the family left the rectory.[3]
3. Bent, Mr: Presumably an employee of Benjamin Stroud of Newbury, the auctioneer who conducted the clearance of Steventon Rectory. See R. Vick, 'The Sale at Steventon Parsonage', *Collected Reports*, IV. 295-8.[4]
4. Bramston family of Oakley Hall. Wither (1753–1832) married 1783 Mary Chute . . . Mrs Wither Bramston enjoyed *MP*, but her sister-in-law, 'Mrs' Augusta Bramston found the first three of JA's published novels boring and nonsensical.[5]

My concern is with the 'your Magnesia' reference in the letter and Le Faye's annotation. The paragraph is concerned with books, the books in George Austen's

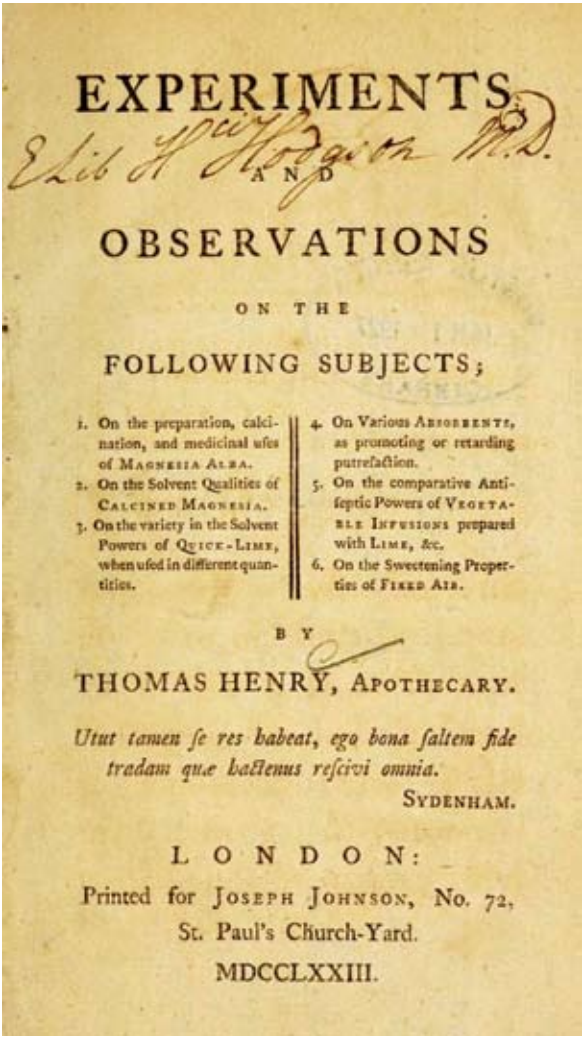
library of 500 volumes and apparently some of Jane's own books, her Dodsley, for example, that had been auctioned off early that May pending the family move to Bath. So why is the reference to the capitalized 'Magnesia' not also referring to a possible *book* owned by Cassandra Austen and not to a magnesium medicine, as Le Faye surmises?

In searching for 'Magnesia' online, I came up with the following sources:



Title page of *An Account Of The Medicinal Virtues Of Magnesia Alba, More Particularly Of Calcined Magnesia; With Plain Directions For The Use Of Them. To Which Is Prefixed, A Concise Detail Of The Invention And Gradual Improvement Of These Medicines*. By Thomas Henry, Apothecary, F.R.S. London: Printed For J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDCCLXXV [1775]. https://janeausteninvermont.blog/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/henry-accountmedicinal-1775-wellcome.jpg

And this, the earlier more detailed edition:



EXPERIMENTS

AND

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS;

1. On the preparation, calcination, and medicinal uses of MAGNESIA ALBA.
2. On the Solvent Qualities of CALCINED MAGNESIA.
3. On the variety in the Solvent Powers of QUICK-LIME, when used in different quantities.
4. On Various ABSORBENTS, as promoting or retarding putrefaction.
5. On the comparative Antiseptic Powers of VEGETABLE INFUSIONS prepared with LIME, &c.
6. On the Sweetening Properties of FIXED AIR.

BY

THOMAS HENRY, APOTHECARY.

Utut tamen se res habeat, ego bona saltem fide tradam quæ hactenus rescivi omnia.

SYDENHAM.

LONDON:

Printed for JOSEPH JOHNSON, No. 72,

St. Paul's Church-Yard.

MDCCLXXIII.

Title page of *Experiments and observations on the following subjects: 1. On the preparation, calcination, and medicinal uses of magnesia alba. 2. On the solvent qualities of calcined magnesia. 3. On the variety in the solvent powers of quick-lime, when used in different quantities. 4. On various absorbents, as promoting or retarding putrefaction. 5. On the comparative antiseptic powers of vegetable infusions prepared with lime, &c. 6. On the sweetening properties of fixed air*. By Thomas Henry, apothecary. London: Printed for Joseph Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard, London, MDCCLXXIII [1773]. https://janeausteninvermont.blog/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/henry-experiments-tp-1773-ia.jpg

Thomas Henry (1734-1816) was a surgeon-apothecary and chemist. Born in Wales, he later moved to Manchester and was appointed visiting apothecary to the Manchester Infirmary in 1789. He co-founded the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1781 and became its president in 1807. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, and in 1786 he was elected to the American Philosophical Society.

In 1771, he invented a process for preparing magnesia alba and became known as 'Magnesia Henry'. The first production of carbonated water is also attributed to him – he made it in twelve-gallon barrels using an apparatus based on Joseph Priestley's design.

Thomas Henry (1734-1816)

Talking about Magnesia might be, like politics in *Northanger Abbey*, 'an easy step to silence', but basically, magnesium oxide (MgO), or magnesia, is a white hygroscopic solid mineral that occurs naturally as periclase and is a source of magnesium. It has various uses, including as a fertilizer and its medical use, as suggested by Le Faye, for relief of heartburn and indigestion, as an antacid, magnesium supplement, and as a short-term laxative.

My belief is that Cassandra had one of these books by Thomas Henry, most

likely the first one noted above on 'Medicinal Uses'. Like so many of the other books in George Austen's library, it was sold off but not accounted for as an individual title and subsequently lost somewhere along the way. This could only be absolutely confirmed if such a title came up for auction with Cassandra Austen's inscription. One can only hope, but in the meantime, we have yet *another* title to add to the wide-ranging reading list of the Austen family.

Notes

1. Deirdre Le Faye, ed. *Jane Austen's Letters*. 4th ed. OUP, 2011, p.92.
2. *Ibid*., p.391.
3. *Ibid*., p.391.
4. *Ibid*., p.496.
5. *Ibid*., p.499.

Images:

1. Title page: *Medicinal Virtues* is thirty-two pages – if you are so inclined, you can read the full-text at the Wellcome Collection website: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jd7je558/items

2. Title page: *Experiments and Observations* . . . is 180 pages, the full-text available at Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/experimentsobser00henr/page/n5/mode/2up

3. Thomas Henry: from Wikipedia – Edward Mansfield Brockbank, *Sketches of the Lives and Work of The Honorary Medical Staff of the Manchester Infirmary 1752 to 1830*. University Press, Manchester 1904, p.72. Date and artist unknown.

Edward Austen's Inheritance – Not as rich as we thought

Martin Caddick

Most people with an interest in Jane Austen know that her brother Edward was made the heir to wealthy relatives – the Knights of Godmersham. He inherited about 10,000 acres of land, and some sources put his annual income at as much as £15,000 – 50% more than Mr Darcy in Pride & Prejudice.

The contrast between this apparent wealth and the modest living enjoyed by his mother and sisters in Chawton causes many of us to wonder why he did not do more for them. But now, an in-depth review of the surviving Knight family bank account records shows that the Knights may not have been as well off as we have assumed.

This article revisits the story of Edward's inheritance and explains the background to the Knights' wealth based on records of their bank accounts and investments. Since Edward did not change his name to Knight until 1812, he is referred to as Austen throughout.

Edward's Inheritance

Jane Austen's niece, Anna Lefroy, recorded the story[1] she'd heard from her Uncle Henry about his brother Edward's 'adoption'.[2] Apparently in 1779, Thomas Knight II, the heir to Godmersham in Kent, and his new wife, Catherine, were on a honeymoon tour of their family estates in Hampshire. Upon visiting the Austens, they took a liking to Edward, then aged ten, and took him with them for the rest of their journey. This did not lead to his immediate removal to Godmersham, as some people believe, but rather by degrees, it was understood that he would be their heir as it became apparent that they would have no children of their own.

This made more sense than first appears. The Revd George Austen was a second cousin to Thomas's mother, Jane Knight (née Monk) – they had known each other from their connections in Tonbridge. Thomas's sister, also named Jane, accompanied the newly-wed couple to Steventon to be godmother to Charles Austen, who was born in June 1779. George and his sons were the closest male relatives to the paternal Knight family, and Edward was a logical choice to be the default heir.[3] Edward continued to be educated by his father at his Steventon home, visiting the Knights during holidays. It was probably in 1786 around the age of eighteen that he went to live at Godmersham, whereupon he was sent on a Grand Tour of Europe for nearly four years, returning in 1790.

Thomas Knight II died in 1794, leaving a life interest in his estates to Catherine and naming Edward as his heir.[4] At the end of 1797, Catherine offered to hand the estates over to Edward, allowing him to move back to Godmersham with his growing family and to take over the management of the property while she moved to Canterbury.

This inheritance was great good fortune for Edward and for the Austens in

general. Writing in 1815, Mary Russell Mitford described the inheritance as 'an estate of five thousand a year in Kent, and another of nearly double the value in Hampshire'.[5] The total income of £15,000 was significantly more than Mr Darcy commanded, but we are reminded of the possibility of exaggeration by the line in *Emma* about a fortune 'of so many thousands as would always be called ten'.

Jane Austen herself was inclined to look the gift horse in the mouth, writing to Cassandra,

> Mrs Knight giving up the Godmersham Estate to Edward was no such prodigious act of Generosity after all it seems, for she has reserved herself an income out of it still;—this ought to be known, that her conduct may not be over-rated.—I rather think Edward shews the most Magnanimity of the two, in accepting her Resignation with such Incumbrances.[6]

While there was a touch of facetiousness in this comment, she had a point. The conveyance[7] between Catherine and Edward placed a rentcharge of £2,000 upon the Hampshire estates in Catherine's favour. Furthermore, the income from the estates when Edward took over was nowhere near what Mitford estimated, nor ever would be. At the time she was writing, the average gross annual income from the estates was closer to £8,000.[8] Jane, however, was doing Catherine a great injustice, as we shall see.

Income, Banking and Investments

This article looks in more depth at the Knight family finances, specifically between 1773 (when Thomas Knight II opened his account at Goslings Bank) and 1807 (when Edward Austen and Catherine Knight moved their accounts from Goslings to Henry Austen's bank). The primary records consulted were the Goslings Bank accounts of Thomas Knight II, Catherine Knight and Edward Austen, the Hoares Bank accounts of Thomas Knight I and II, as well as the Bank of England records of the annuities they held. But before diving into this, it would be useful to provide a recap on income and banking at that time.

Banking: The banking system had grown up from the end of the seventeenth century. The early London banks were often goldsmiths that had developed a reliable system of accepting deposits and making loans based on promissory notes. In parallel, local banks were developing as a means of settling bills. Rather than shopping with a bagful of gold attracting undesirable interest, country gentry would often expect tradesmen to open an account that they would settle on a regular basis. Some tradesmen extended this arrangement whereby they held deposits of cash and would pay bills incurred with other tradesmen. They expanded to offer credit and make small loans, but as these services turned into banking, they were required to have a London correspondent bank.

Both Goslings Bank and C. Hoare & Co. were early London banks situated in Fleet Street and acted as the main bank account for their clients. Net income from the various Knight estates was remitted to these accounts either directly from

tenants or stewards, or via local banks and their London correspondent banks. The London banks also collected the income from investments and personal payments from other sources and increasingly made payments to individuals and businesses or their banks.

Income: When Jane Austen and her contemporaries talk about income – such as Mr Darcy being worth £10,000 a year – they are talking about gross income from land and investments. Land was the primary source of income for the landed gentry and was generally valued at about twenty times the annual rent. This income came from the rent paid by the tenant farmers and from various fees levied by manorial courts. The estate income deposited into the bank was usually net of expenses, and therefore only represented a proportion of the gross income – I estimate it to be 60%. There is logic behind this estimate, and it is consistent with Linda Slothouber's analysis of Edward's later accounts[9] where she has access to the Hampshire estate accounts as well as the Goslings accounts.

Annuities: Annuities were used rather like savings accounts and were a form of government bond rather than what we generally understand an annuity to be today. Most commonly these were known as 'Consols'. The British government had issued a variety of different annuities with different rates of interest, but in 1751, many government stocks were consolidated into a single issue with fixed interest (known as the dividend) of 3% pa, which were called 'Consolidated Annuities'. They had no maturity date but were redeemable on call. 'Reduced Annuities' were issued between 1791 and 1883, paying dividends of 3%, replacing earlier annuities that had paid 3½%. South Sea stock, dating back to the infamous South Sea Bubble, paid 5% interest. The stock price had crashed but, because it had been backed by the government, it became government debt, rather like consols, and continued to be traded as a form of government bond – in fact it was the third most traded stock for the remainder of the eighteenth century. Ownership of annuities was with the bearer of the certificate (regardless of whose name they were originally in) and could therefore be traded. Their value in trade depended on whether the prevailing rate of interest was higher or lower than 3%. If alternative bonds offered higher returns (such as in times of war), it drove the price of the consols down to the point where the return on their purchase price was competitive.

The Value of Money: Comparing the value of a pound in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the value today is not a simple matter. We have to take into account not only how inflation differs across services and commodities but also the different distribution of the rising wealth in society. The following table[10] takes £1 in 1800 and shows what that pound would be worth at fifty-year intervals up to the present day. The ***Commodity*** row tells you the value of the pound in terms of purchasing goods. The ***Relative Income*** row shows how much you would need to earn to maintain your relative position in society, in which terms Mr Darcy's annual income of £10,000 a year would be worth over £13m today.

Relative Value	1750	1800	1850	1900	1950	2000	2023
Commodity	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.7	2.4	48.0	104.0
Relative Income	0.4	1.0	0.8	1.7	8.6	637.8	1,341.0

If one considers the Dashwoods in *Sense and Sensibility*, exiled to a country cottage on £500 a year, their income would translate to an income of £52,000 on the commodity measure or £670,000 on the relative income measure. Quite a difference. What is clear is that simple comparisons based on commodity inflation (typically used by sources such as the Bank of England) gives a very misleading picture of a family's relative wealth.

In the table above, it is interesting to note that the value of the pound decreased between 1800 and 1850. This is partly because of the higher prices and wages in 1800 and during the Napoleonic Wars, which also distorts the inflation between 1750 and 1800. There were periods of very high inflation and uncertainty but taking the century between 1750 and 1850 as a whole, it was a relatively stable period and this makes comparisons simpler.

The Knight Family

To understand where the wealth of the Knights came from, we need to go back a further century to the good fortune of Thomas Knight II's father, Thomas Knight I. He was born in 1701 as Thomas Brodnax and in 1726 he inherited Ford Place in Godmersham, Kent. The Brodnax family, like the Austens of that time, were squires of a small estate, probably less than 1,000 acres. But Thomas's mother, Anne, came from the wealthy May family and her cousin, Sir Thomas May, chose young Thomas Brodnax to be his heir on the condition he changed his name to May. In 1727, Thomas inherited the old May manor house of Rawmere and the surrounding lands near Lyminster, Sussex, as well as property on St Martin's Lane in London.[11] Less than two years later, Thomas (now twenty-eight) married the eighteen–year–old Jane Monk, who was herself the co–heiress with her sister, Barbara, to the manor of Buckingham and land in Southwick in Sussex. Jane was the great-granddaughter of John Austen, whose picture hangs in Jane Austen's House.

Going back to the May family, one of Anne's aunts, Mary May, was the grandmother of Elizabeth Knight of Chawton. Elizabeth had inherited the Chawton estates, probably around 2,500 acres at this time, together with Steventon and Abbots Barton in Hampshire, West Dean in Sussex, and Great Fosters in Surrey. She died childless in 1737 and left her lands to Thomas (Brodnax) May, a second cousin, on condition that he changed his name to Knight.

The newly renamed Thomas Knight had seen his holdings grow almost tenfold in little more than a decade. He set about rationalising his sprawling estates, selling property in Sussex and consolidating his lands around Chawton and Godmersham. He sold Buckingham manor in 1734, swapped West Dean for the lands around Neatham (near Chawton) in 1744, and sold Rawmere to the Duke of Richmond in 1777. In 1750, he bought the manor of Farringdon (1,100 acres

next to Chawton) from Lewis Cage, a friend in Kent. Over a fifty–year period, the holdings in Hampshire grew from about 4,300 to 6,800 acres while the holdings in Kent expanded to 2,230 acres. Although the lands around Lyminster in Sussex were sold in 1786, the Knights retained the land at Southwick and May's Building in London until well into the nineteenth century.

By 1732, having demolished his father's old house, Thomas had built a compact and elegant new house at Godmersham in parkland laid out in the new English landscape style. It was by no means excessively large. Nor was it quiet and empty, as they shared their home with his ten children (although tragically six died in childhood) as well as his sister and cousin.

Both Thomas and Jane were well educated, and they moved in intellectual circles that included the historian Catherine Macaulay, the antiquarian Samuel Pegge (vicar at Godmersham), and Sir Joseph Banks. Jane, sadly, died in 1765 aged only fifty-five. There was more than a hint of mental instability in the family with Jane's sister, Barbara, being committed to the care of a close friend, Elizabeth Thomas; and one of their two surviving daughters, Elizabeth Knight, was declared insane immediately following the death of her brother, Thomas Knight II.

Thomas Knight II, born in 1735, was educated at Eton and Oxford and went on the Grand Tour in 1760 accompanied by neighbours of his age, Wyndham Knatchbull, Edward Dering and Brook Bridges. He returned to be elected as the MP for Romsey in 1761. Thomas was already forty-four when he married Wyndham Knatchbull's twenty-six-year-old sister, Catherine. Her cousin, Sir Edward Knatchbull, was the father of the Edward Knatchbull who would later marry Edward Austen's daughter Fanny.

What do the Bank Records tell us?

No bank records for the family have been found from before 1773. I suspect that they banked with their former neighbour at Chilham Castle, Sir George Colebrooke. His dubious financial dealings had led to the bank he owned suspending payments in March 1773, shortly after which Thomas Knight I opened his new account at Hoares while his son opened an account at Goslings. The older Thomas probably stood to lose a large sum in Colebrooke's subsequent bankruptcy (although he did later receive a partial repayment)[12] and this blow was compounded by the plummeting value of the annuities that he had invested in. However, there was no need for panic. Indeed, he felt secure enough to start work on new wings for the Godmersham house in 1777, one of which was the library wing mentioned in Jane Austen's letters. The work was completed in 1784 at a total cost of £3,800.

Thomas Knight I died in 1781, aged eighty. His annual deposits into his Hoares account between 1771 and 1781 averaged nearly £3,900. Over 80% of this was remitted to Hoares by his steward for Hampshire and Sussex, John Silvester. We can estimate his annual gross income to be about £5,800, which, allowing for subsequent inflation, really was at Mr Darcy's level of rich. But he lived well within his income with the expenses paid from the bank averaging only £1,700. He was able to save money and accumulate consols and reduced annuities with a

face value of £28,000 upon his death.

Thomas Knight II had set up his own household at nearby Bilting and, with his sister Jane in occupation at Godmersham where building work continued, he was in no hurry to move back. Neither of his surviving sisters had married, but their father's will left them well provided for, with £12,500 each (Elizabeth's share being under Jane's control). Jane was therefore financially independent, and she swapped homes with Thomas and moved to Bilting.

Despite the apparently healthy state of his father's finances, Thomas Knight II was presented with serious challenges, the most pressing of which were his sisters' legacies. In the aftermath of the American War of Independence, the value of the annuities that should have covered them had fallen to little more than half their face value. Thomas was obliged to sell off £9,800 of the consols (although he did transfer £3,200 to Jane) and used the proceeds to buy Bilting outright and the manor house at Eggerton (where Elizabeth later lived). He used the dividends from the remaining reduced annuities (with a face value of £15,000) to make payments to Jane and for the continuing care of his aunt, Barbara Monk. These payments averaged £930 a year for the rest of the decade and were on top of a further £5,000 he gave to Jane in cash.

Thomas's expenses were much higher than his father's, averaging £4,350. Many of these were payments to family and there are few signs of any great extravagance. There was a payment of £97/16/6 made to George Romney in December 1783, doubtless for the well-known portraits of Thomas and Catherine. In 1782 there is a payment of five guineas to the young artist, John Hoppner, which I suspect is for the portrait of Edward, then aged fourteen, now displayed at Jane Austen's House. In 1784-5, Thomas and Catherine toured France for the sake of Catherine's health.[13] The tour probably cost Thomas about £1,300 in total (if we adopt the dubious approach of including payments made to names that sound vaguely French). It was interesting to note the payments to Herries and Co. totalling £800 at this time. Herries' Circular Notes were an early form of travellers' cheques.

Until 1788, Thomas's average gross income of £5,100 nearly matched his father's. But his annual expenses substantially exceeded the net income of £3,100. He was living beyond his means and in 1785, he was obliged to reorganise his financial affairs and sell some property, including that around Lyminster in Sussex, as well as Great Fosters, and the Hyde Abbey farm, to make up the shortfall.

Edward Austen probably moved to Godmersham early in 1786 and he was immediately sent to start his Grand Tour. Arrangements must have started at the beginning of 1786, because we see payments being made for letters abroad in January that year and the purchase of £30 of Herries' notes in July. Between 1787 and 1788, Edward stayed with Monsieur Meuron in Switzerland, to whom Thomas paid nearly £500. Edward's subsequent visits to Dresden and Italy were financed by a further £1,000 in Herries' notes. The total payments that can be attributed to Edward's Grand Tour add up to nearly £2,000 between 1786 and 1791. Most intriguing are two payments totalling £70 to D. Lavaggi, in June 1790, made when

Edward was in Italy. Lavaggi was probably an Italian banker associated with the art world, and these may have been payments for the famous portrait of Edward Austen on the Grand Tour most likely by Hugh Hamilton. Edward paid duty of £3/5/- in March 1791 for the import of a picture from Leghorn[14] in Italy, which is most likely this portrait.

After Edward's return, he did not stay at Godmersham for long. In December 1791, he married Elizabeth Bridges and moved to Rowling – a small manor house owned by Elizabeth's father, Sir Brook Bridges of Goodnestone. Thomas made over £1,000 of consols to Edward as part of the marriage settlement as well as several farms and an allowance of £75 a quarter. Edward's own total income averaged £530 a year up to 1796.

Thomas Knight died at the end of 1794, suffering a paralytic stroke while at Chawton House. He left his fortune in a considerably reduced state from that inherited from his father. The earlier sale of property had had the effect of reducing his income. Far from the fabulous £15,000 Mitford suggested, the Knight gross income at the time of Thomas Knight II's death had fallen to an average over his last five years of only £3,700 (£2,300 banked). Thomas's holdings of annuities had fallen to a face value of less than £10,000.

This does raise the question of whether there are missing financial records that might put a different light on matters. Jane Knight had held an account at Child & Co,[15] but there is no evidence to suggest Thomas or Catherine did. They did have bank accounts with Gipps & Co. (later Hammonds) in Canterbury.[16] There are small payments from Goslings into these bank accounts which implies that they were used to manage local expenditure but not to receive estate income. Perhaps a significant proportion of the Kent income was received as cash. But the Kent estates were not then large enough to make a substantial difference to the totals. In short, there is no evidence to suggest that there are any significant missing sources of income. There would be clues had this been the case and I can find none.

To make matters worse, although Thomas had left a life interest in the estate to Catherine, both she and Edward had to take loans to tide them over until their regular income could be restored. Once Catherine was able to get control of her finances, she oversaw a recovery of the gross income to an average of £5,300 (while her expenditure fell to £2,900) between 1796 and 1798. She was more generous to Edward than Thomas, paying him £425 in 1796 and £740 in 1797. At the end of 1797, she decided to give up her life interest in the estate, allowing Edward to take over and to move to Godmersham. Edward put up a proper show of reluctance, but Catherine was set on her plan, writing to him:

> If anything were wanting, my dearest Edward, to confirm my resolution concerning the plan I propose executing, your Letter would have that effect; it is impossible for any person to express their gratitude and affection in terms more pleasing and gratifying than those you have chosen, and from the bottom of my heart I believe you to be perfectly sincere when you assure me that your happiness is best secured by seeing me in the full enjoyment of every thing that can contribute to my ease and comfort, and that happiness, my dear Edward will be yours by acceding to my wishes. From the time that my partiality for you induced

Mr. Knight to treat you as our adopted child I have felt for you the tenderness of a Mother, and never have you appeared more deserving of that affection than at this time.[17]

Many sources point out that Catherine retained an income of £2,000 for herself, and indeed the legal conveyance of the estate contained a rentcharge of that sum for her benefit.[18] If she had insisted upon the payment of this, Edward truly would have been magnanimous in accepting the inheritance, as the estate could barely afford that. But both Catherine's and Edward's bank accounts show that this was not enforced. Edward only ever paid her an average of just over £800 a year, which happened to be the amount that would have been her widow's jointure under her marriage settlement. Moreover, Catherine was living within this income and investing any surplus in consols. Her dividends from the consols allowed Edward to progressively reduce the payments he made to her.

My conclusion is that Thomas Knight II was not a diligent manager of his estate and had rather let his finances slide. Consequently, Edward was not as rich as people imagine. In his early years managing the estate (up to 1806), his gross income was only about £5,000, and there were many calls upon this. But under his astute management, the estate income recovered so that by the time of Jane Austen's death in 1817, his gross income had risen to around £8,000, and he was able to cope with the shocks of the failure of Henry Austen's bank and the cost of defending his ownership of the Chawton estates from the Hinton/Baverstock challenge.

My thanks to Margaret Smyth, John Avery Jones, and Hazel Jones, and the archivists at C. Hoare, Barclays, and the Bank of England.

Records Consulted

Thomas Knight I
- Bank accounts 1773-1781 at C. Hoare & Co.
- Annuity Ledgers 1767-1781 at Bank of England

Thomas Knight II
- Bank accounts 1773-1796 at C. Hoare & Co.
- Bank accounts 1773-1798 at Goslings Bank
- Annuity Ledgers 1788-1798 at Bank of England

Catherine Knight
- Bank accounts 1794-1807 at Goslings Bank
- Annuity Ledgers 1792-1812 at Bank of England

Edward Austen
- Bank accounts 1791-1807 at Goslings Bank
- Annuity Ledgers 1791-1812 at Bank of England

Notes

1. Lefroy MS, quoted in *Jane Austen, A Family Record*, by Deirdre Le Faye.
2. Some people object to the term 'adoption' since it had no legal basis in

England until 1926. But it was a term used loosely and Catherine Knight herself described Edward as 'our adopted child' in a letter dated 24 Nov 1794 in *The Austen Papers*. This is stated in the indenture from 20 Jan 1798 (HRO: 18M61/BOX/E/2) .

3. The eldest Austen boy, James, stood to inherit the estate of James Leigh Perrot (Mrs Austen's brother) and the second son, George, had some form of mental issues. Edward, as the third son, was next in line.
4. Thomas Knight's will: HRO 18M61/BOX/A/1/1.
5. *The Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*. R. Brinley Johnson (ed.). Letter from 3 April 1815.
6. *Jane Austen's Letters*. Deirdre Le Faye (ed.). Letter 17 to Cassandra Austen, 9 January 1799.
7. Conveyance from Catherine Knight to Edward Austen: HRO 18M61/BOX/D/5.
8. *Jane Austen, Edward Knight & Chawton*. Linda Slothouber. This is a detailed examination of Edward Austen's finances between 1808 and 1819. Her estimates of gross income in this period average roughly £8,000. John Avery Jones suggests that Slothouber underestimated the income from Kent by not factoring in income from 1,500 acres in Kent that Edward kept in-hand, although some of this was Godmersham's pleasure grounds. If so, the gross income might be greater by perhaps £1,000 or more,
9. Expenses might include taxes, fees, investments and other costs, but there is no consistency to what was remitted to the main bank account. I use the figure of 60%, which matches Slothouber's analysis, to estimate gross income, and it is likely to give results which are approximately correct.
10. Based on Measuring Worth - Purchasing Power of Pound.
11. May's Building built on this land by Thomas May in 1739: St. Martin's Lane / British History Online.
12. George Colebrooke - Wikipedia Colebrooke did eventually mostly pay back most of his creditors over the years according to Wikipedia.
13. *Jane Austen's Outlandish Cousin*. Deirdre Le Faye, Chapter 2.
14. Livorno, near Florence.
15. A few doors down from Goslings and Hoares in Fleet Street, Child & Co. was uniquely and competently run by a woman, Sarah Child, between 1782 and 1793. Her granddaughter, Lady Jersey, became the senior partner in 1806 and will be familiar to readers of Georgette Heyer novels as a patron of Almacks.
16. The records for the various banks related to Gipps and Hammond would be in the archives of NatWest, as are the Childs records. But most contemporary ledgers have been lost, and their archivists drew a blank on any records for the Knights or Austens.
17. *Austen Papers 1704 - 1856*. Letter from Catherine Knight to Edward Austen, 24 Nov 1794.
18. This is stated in the conveyance from 20 Jan 1798 (HRO: 18M61/BOX/E/2).

'The Tremendous Law-suit'[1] against Edward Austen Knight

John Avery Jones

Edward Austen Knight[2] paid £15,000 in 1818 to settle several actions in the courts brought by John Knight Hinton and Jane Baverstock, née Hinton, (plus, for legal reasons, her husband James), who were claiming that they had a good title to Edward Austen Knight's property in Hampshire. I shall endeavour to explain what the case was about, using archive material in the National Archives and the Hampshire Record Office, and to consider whether they had a good case. Previous commentators have not understood the cause of the case, suggesting that they forgot to carry out some step in 1757. Mary Russell Mitford, a near contemporary of Jane Austen and the friend of Miss Hinton, reported, 'it seems he forgot some ceremony—passing a fine, I think they call it—with regard to the Hampshire property, which Mr. Baverstock has claimed in right of his mother, together with the mesne rents, and is likely to be successful'.[3] This claim is not plausible, as it involved compromising court proceedings. Another suggestion, that the documents were executed out of legal term time, is an anachronism, as the procedure then involved court proceedings.[4] As we shall see, the claim by Hinton and Baverstock was that there was an error in the order of carrying out the various steps.

The dispute seems to have started in early 1814, as Jane Austen records in her letter of 5 - 8 March 1814 to Cassandra: 'Perhaps you have not heard that Edward has a good chance of escaping his Lawsuit. His opponent "knocks under." The terms of Agreement are not quite settled.'[5] Nothing seems to be known about these negotiations and the terms for compromising the Hinton/Baverstock claim, presumably involving some payment to them, cannot have been agreed because they started legal actions in October 1814 (Court of Common Pleas) and February 1815 (Court of Chancery).

We can begin the story with Elizabeth Knight (died March 1737) who was originally Elizabeth Martin and took the name Knight, as was required for all owners of the land in Hampshire[6] that she inherited from her brother Christopher Knight (also formerly Martin).[7] She married twice, first William Woodward (later Knight), and second Bulstrode Peachy (also later Knight). She survived both husbands and there was no issue of either marriage. She effectively kept the Hampshire land out of the marriage settlement which merely provided for herself and Bulstrode Peachy Knight to be paid the income during their joint lives, but otherwise the land was held for her absolutely.[8] Elizabeth Knight left the land by will[9] to trustees to be held for her second cousin Thomas Brodnax, later May, and then Knight (1701-1781) – changing his name every time he inherited land – whom I shall call 'Thomas Knight (elder)' – for life, followed by an entail to his eldest son, whom I shall call 'Thomas Knight (younger)' (1735-1794) and the

heirs male of his body. (An entail is merely a cut down[10] freehold that devolved automatically to the specified class of heirs, normally, as here, male heirs.[11]) Thomas Knight (younger) was Edward Austen's adoptive father. If that entail died out, Elizabeth Knight's will left the land next to William Lloyd[12] on similar trusts, who had died without issue, and then to John Hinton (1720-1802) for life followed by an entail to his son by his second marriage, John Knight Hinton (1774-1846) and the heirs male of his body.[13] If all the entails failed, the land would revert to the heir of Elizabeth Knight who, through her mother, was Jane Baverstock (née Hinton).[14] John Knight Hinton and Jane Baverstock (whom I shall refer to together as 'the Hintons') brought these actions against Edward Austen Knight. They were therefore Elizabeth Knight's heirs who would have inherited in the absence of a will, but who were only third and fourth in line under the will, hence their dissatisfaction and eagerness to pick holes in Edward Knight's title.[15] The last surviving trustee of Elizabeth Knight's will was William Guidott and after his death in 1745, his heir Mary Woodroffe (who had to act together with her husband) automatically became trustee. Most unusually the Woodroffes still held the legal estate in the land as trustees for Thomas Knight (elder) for life and then Thomas Knight (younger) in tail male. Normally the former would have already had a legal life estate with the land in his name, particularly as he had been entitled since 1737, and the son would have had a legal entail, but for some reason presumably connected with complications about Elizabeth Knight's estate[16] the legal estate in the land was still held by the will trustees.

The 1757 fine and recovery

Thomas Knight (younger) had attained the age of twenty-one in 1756 and normally his father would have persuaded him to bar the entail to make him the absolute owner (subject to his father's life estate, although normally the father would give up some of the income to his son) and then resettle the land on himself for life and then an entail for his eldest son. The procedure involved eliminating the rights of (a) the tenant in tail's (usually male) heirs, which was the purpose of the fine, and (b) the persons entitled in remainder, which was the purpose of the recovery. I had previously assumed that the procedure about to be described was in connection with his barring the entail which would be expected when he became of full age, but I had difficulty in understanding some of the steps if that were the case, until I found a summary of a missing document that was the final piece of the jigsaw.[17] This demonstrated that the procedure had a different purpose, solely that of eliminating the interests of the successive beneficiaries under Elizabeth Knight's will, the Hintons, for which the same procedure as would have been adopted for barring an entail was required, particularly the recovery, but this could not be done until Thomas Knight (younger) was of full age. Unusually the procedure left his entail in place without barring it, but the important difference was that the ultimate remainder was now in favour of Thomas Knight (elder) and not the Hintons. We shall see that his son did later bar it when he married in 1779. Accordingly, the procedure was aimed entirely at eliminating the Hintons' interest which perhaps

made it more likely that the Hintons would later attack it.

At the time we are considering in 1757, a two-stage process was necessary to achieve this, and it would have been virtually identical if the entail had been barred. It would be more than another seventy-five years before the procedure for barring an entail was simplified and a disentailing deed was all that was required.[18] I should warn the reader that what I am about to say will not seem credible as it depends heavily on legal fictions. I should add in fairness to the courts that they had approved the procedure in order to remove the problems caused by an Act of Parliament of 1285[19] that made the sale of entailed land impossible. The courts invented the procedure after two centuries during which 'as Lord Coke informs us, repeated attempts at repealing it were vainly made in parliament'[20] because the peerage, who were big landowners who did not want to sell their entailed land, liked the existing position. I shall set out the procedure in ordinary language with the technical terms in the notes.[21]

(1) The fine

The first step was the fine which does not mean what you might think, because in this context 'fine' is short for final compromise (or more accurately *finalis concordia* as the documents were in Latin until 1733), under which someone in collusion with the tenant in tail claimed to own the land and an action was compromised in his favour and the compromise registered in court. The effect when barring an entail was to eliminate the interests of the heirs of the body of the tenant in tail.

In our case the complication was that the land was in the name of Mary Woodroffe as trustee of Elizabeth Knight's will. She (and for legal reasons her husband) covenanted on 19 April 1757 with Francis Austen (Edward Austen Knight's great uncle (1698-1791 and a solicitor of Clifford's Inn[22]) acting in collusion with the Thomas Knights that in order to convey a legal life estate in the Hampshire land to Thomas Knight (elder) they would start proceedings for a fine in the Court of Common Pleas (which had a monopoly on real actions under which the land itself would be recovered rather than damages in lieu).[23] A writ of covenant was issued and the fine was levied on 24 April compromising the action by accepting that Francis Austen was the owner. The compromise was registered in the court records on 24 April[24] and proclamations would be made in open court in a total of four legal terms.[25] Normally this step would have been taken by Thomas Knight (younger) as tenant in tail, instead of the Woodroffes, but he was not a party to it.

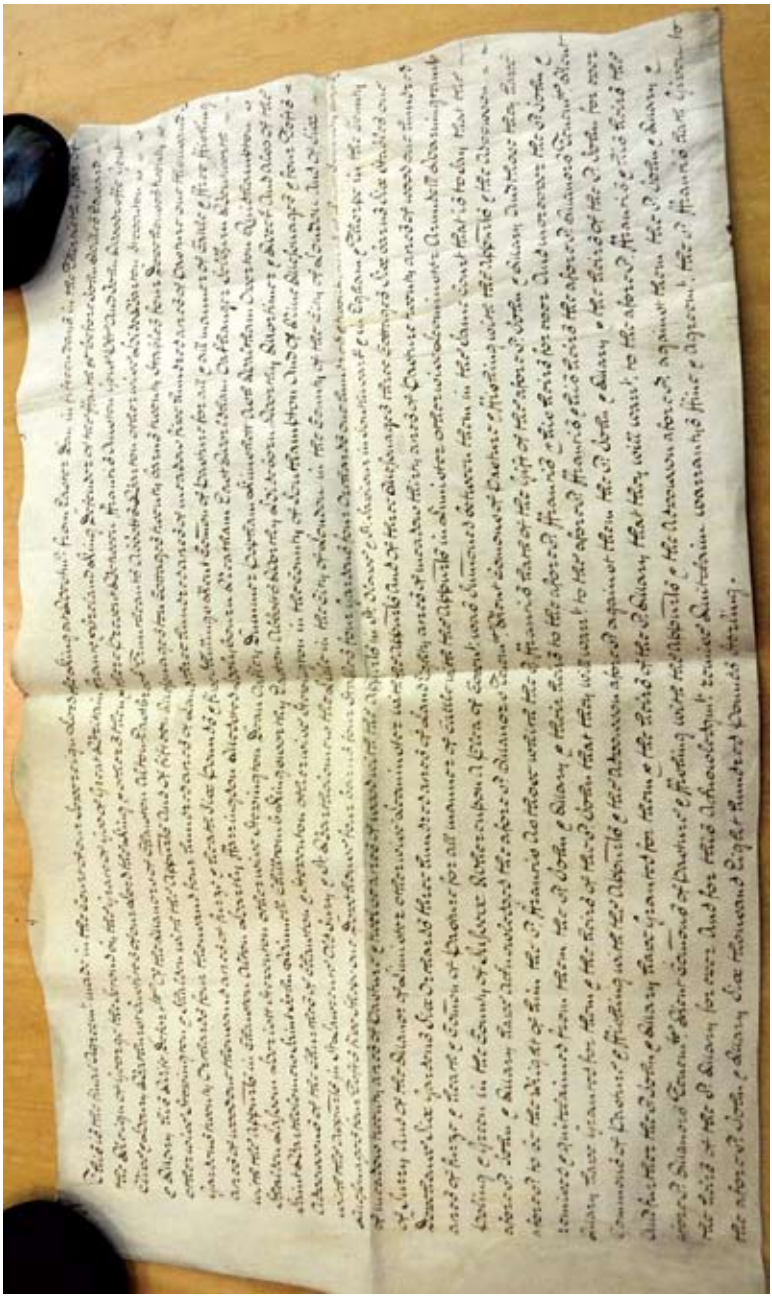
Next, on 21 April, Thomas Knight (elder) sold his equitable [beneficial] life estate and Thomas Knight (younger) sold his equitable entail to Francis Austen acting in collusion with them for the fictitious price of £6,800 by means of a bargain and sale (a normal means of transferring land). This became effective when the document was enrolled in the Court of Chancery on 24 April.[26] It is the timing of these steps that was the cause of the dispute.

(2) The recovery

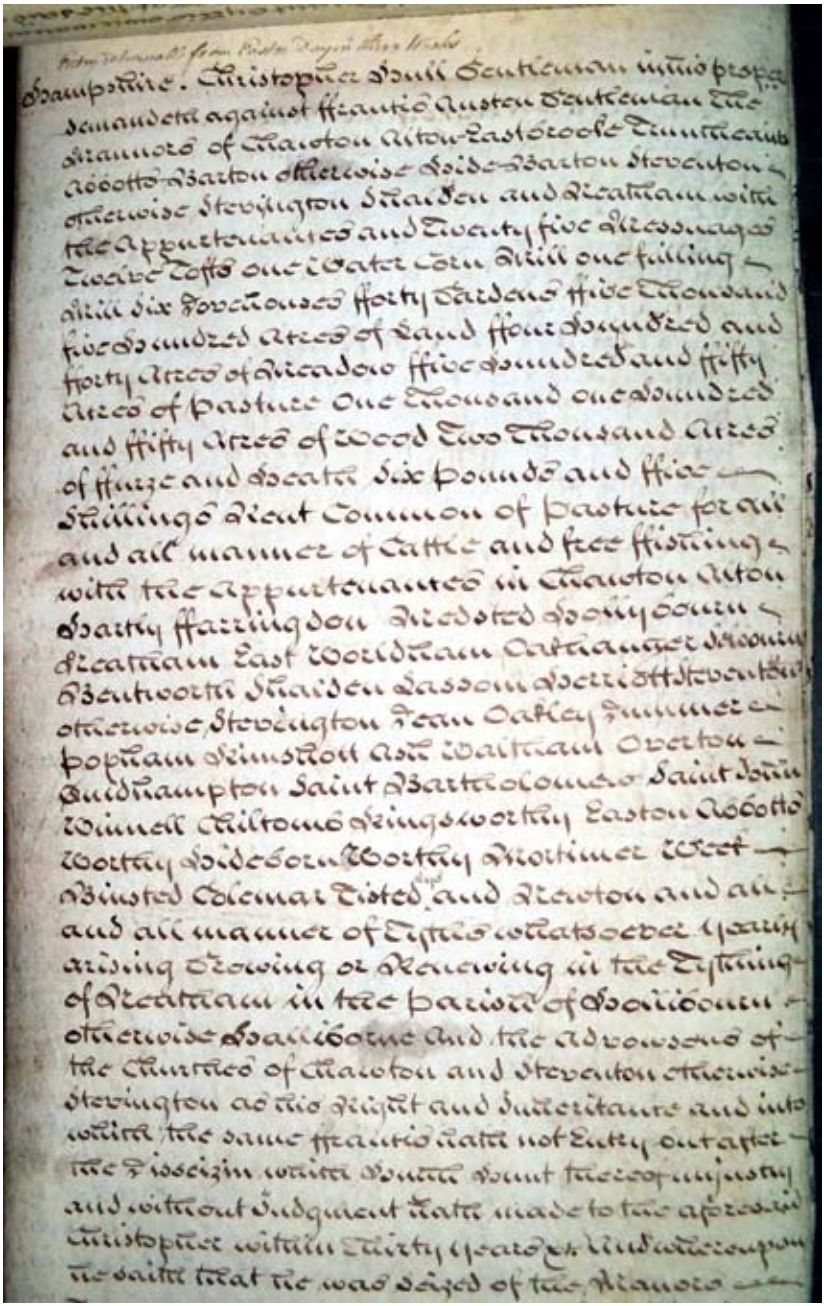
The second step was the recovery under which yet another person[27] acting in collusion with the person entitled as the result of the fine started an action[28] in the Court of Common Pleas claiming (falsely) that the latter had dispossessed him of the land. The effectiveness of this step depended on the principle that if the transferor of land guaranteed[29] that he had a good title to land (which the tenant for life did not have because of the remainderman's interest) which turned out to be wrong, the transferee did still obtain a good title but the transferor (the guarantor) had to compensate the person who loses as a result by transferring land of equal value to him. Here the person ultimately giving the guarantee was a man of straw, usually the court crier[30] who would undertake this for a small fee. In the course of the proceedings, judgement was given against him by default which enabled the court to turn a blind eye to the fact that he could not pay. By this means the claimant now owned the land free of the remainderman's interest who was ostensibly compensated. The claimant had of course previously agreed to deal with the land as directed by the person with whom he was colluding. Of course the courts understood all this but nevertheless required that the procedure was strictly followed.

In our case, one of the terms of the bargain and sale was that Christopher Hull (an associate of Francis Austen[31] in Clifford's Inn), who was also acting in collusion with the Thomas Knights and Austen, brought an action in the Court of Common Pleas claiming that Hugh Hunt (an assumed name) had dispossessed him from the land. Francis Austen defended his position and called on Thomas Knight (younger) to agree that he had guaranteed[32] that Austen had a good title to the land, which he did (although, as mentioned, he could not give Francis Austen a good title as he did not own the remainder interest), and in turn Thomas Knight (younger) called on Edmund Wilson (the court crier, possibly an assumed name) to agree that he had guaranteed his title.[33] Thomas Knight (younger) claimed against Wilson on the guarantee of title. In the course of the proceedings, Hull and Wilson left the court together with the court's permission[34] but only the former returned. Wilson, having been summoned to return and failed to appear, was in contempt of court and a worthless judgement by default was given against him without any further investigation requiring him to transfer other land of equal value to Thomas Knight (younger) who would transfer it to Francis Austen who as a matter of law would hold it for the Hintons. The Court gave judgement for the land in issue in favour of Hull and directed the Sheriff (John Chute, a predecessor of William Chute MP[35] of the Vyne who was known to Jane Austen) to deliver it to him, which happened on 16 May. The recovery was sealed by the Court on 23 May.

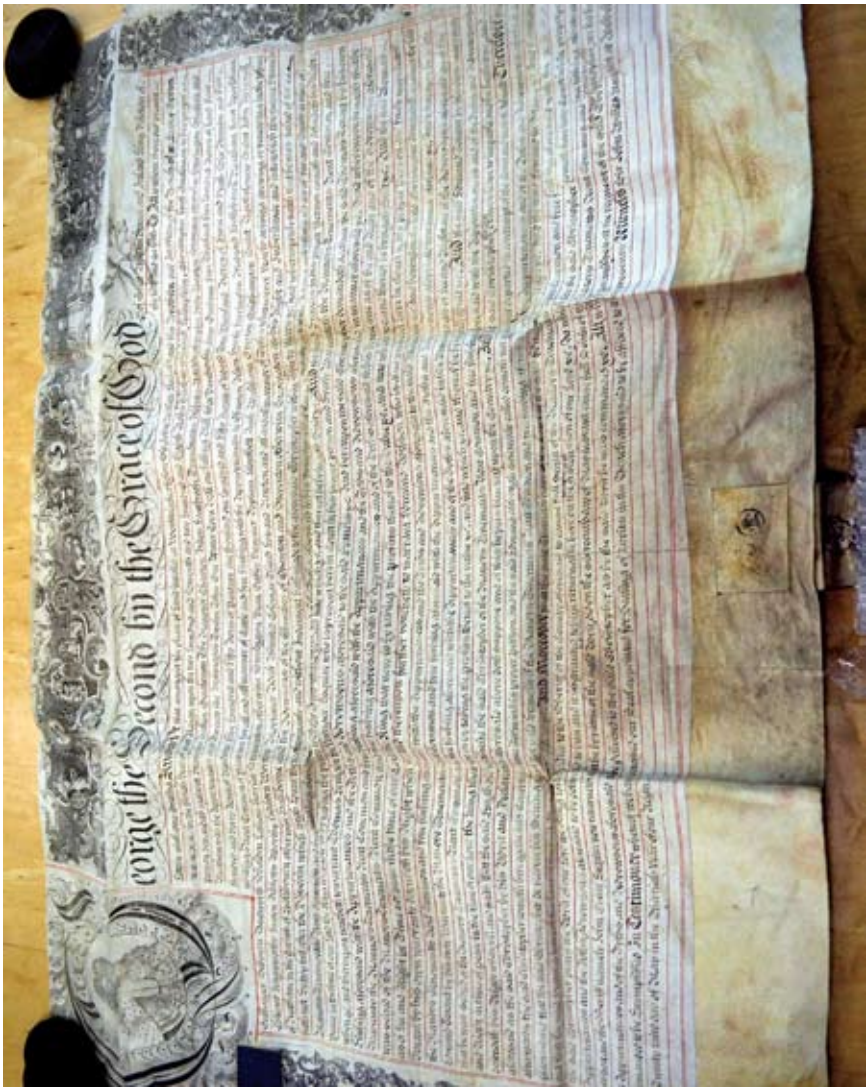
The illustration below shows the elaborate Exemplification (official copy issued under the court's seal) of the recovery relating to the land in Hampshire[36] (there were separate ones for each county as the sheriff of the county was involved in the process of giving the title to the land to Hull); and for comparison see the illustration of part of the more mundane version of same document in the Recovery Roll in the Court's records.[37]



Exemplification of the Recovery by the Court of Common Pleas relating to Thomas Knight's Hampshire land reproduced by courtesy of Richard Knight: Hampshire Record Office, 18M61/Box/EK/1/2/2.



The same document in the Recovery Roll in the Court's records in the National Archives.



The Fine reproduced by courtesy of Richard Knight: Hampshire Record Office, 18M61/Box/A/13/1.]

The result was that Hull ended up with a good title which was not of course for his own benefit as it was a term of the bargain and sale that he held the land on the trusts that the two Thomas Knights jointly appointed; they had transferred their interests to Hull by a lease and release of 27 and 28 April 1757[38] before the recovery became effective to hold on trust for Thomas Knight (elder) for life, then a lease for 1,000 years to trustees which would be mortgaged to provide portions totalling £20,000 for his younger children, then an entail to Thomas Knight

(younger),[39] and finally for Thomas Knight (elder) absolutely. This was the only point that would have been different if the entail had been barred; essentially the entail was reinstated rather than turned into an absolute interest.

Francis Austen and Thomas Knight (younger) ended up with a worthless judgement for land of equal value against Wilson, who could not pay, which as a matter of law they held for the benefit of the Hintons, and which had the effect of eliminating their remainder interest in the land in question.

The important change was that if Thomas Knight (younger) had no heirs of his body (as would be the case) the land now reverted to Thomas Knight (elder) and would be dealt with under his will rather than the Hintons becoming automatically entitled under Elizabeth Knight's will. Thomas Knight (elder's) will left the residue of his estate to Thomas Knight (younger) who was also his sole executor.[40] He could then benefit Edward who, not being an heir of Thomas Knight (younger's) body because he was adopted, would not have benefited under Elizabeth Knight's will.

As a postscript it should be mentioned that Thomas Knight (younger) did later bar his entail in connection with his marriage settlement of 3 and 4 May 1779 on his marriage to Catherine Knatchbull, when the land was re-settled in the customary way on him for life with an entail for his eldest son (and various provisions for portions and a jointure). This required a fine granted in 1779 in the Easter Term of 19 George III, but no recovery was necessary as the ultimate remainder was already owned by his father following the earlier fine and recovery. It is strange that he left it so long before barring the entail. Having barred it he was now free to benefit Edward by making a marriage settlement on him, or by will.

The Hintons' claims

The Hintons started two actions. First, an action for ejectment in the Court of Common Pleas in early October 1814 (just within the twenty-year limitation period from the death of Thomas Knight (younger) on 23 October 1794[41]) which from the name 'ejectment' may give the false impression that the Hintons were actually turning Edward off the land. This was not the case. By using even more abstruse legal fictions such an action was the normal method of that Court (which, as has been mentioned, gave remedies over the land itself, not damages in lieu) determining which of them had the better title. Again, I must ask the reader to suspend disbelief. A (fictitious) John Doe claimed to be the leaseholder of John Knight Hinton who had been turned out of the land by a (fictitious) Richard Roe. Hinton's solicitor then forwarded a letter from Doe to Edward advising him to defend the action in Roe's place otherwise he would be turned out of possession, the letter traditionally ending 'your loving friend John Doe'. Edward would be joined in the case on terms that he did not dispute any of the fictions. The issue would then be whether Hinton or Edward had the better title. The reason for the fictions this time was the more usual one of avoiding the problems of a complicated feudal action which was not finally abolished until 1852. The Hintons were also using it to bring pressure on Edward by giving copies of the claim to

Edward's tenants who may have feared they were going to be ejected too. Another accusation by the Hintons, which Edward denied, was that he was 'combining and confederating with divers other persons at present unknown to charge them as parties defendants and contriving for to injure' the Hintons. This had undertones of illegal combinations. It is not clear what they had in mind, but it was all part of their piling pressure on Edward.

Secondly, the Hintons started an action in the Chancery Court in February 1815. The pleadings in the National Archives[42] comprise nine large sheets of parchment (85 cm (33.5 in) wide by 65 cm (25.5 in) long) containing three pages of the Bill of Complaint by John Knight Hinton, and another identical three pages by James and Jane Baverstock, all dated 9 February 1815; Edward Austen Knight's two page Demurrer[43] to part and Answer to the other part of the Bill of Complaint, dated 3 November 1815; and lastly a single page dated 20 November 1816 of Edward Austen Knight's Answer to the amended Bill of Complaint, but there is no amended Bill in the archives so these appear to be incomplete.[44] They are, however, useful for containing much background information.

The Hintons' claim was not that there was an error in any of the 1757 documents, but that there was an error in the timing of the various steps. They said (according to the document settling the dispute in 1818) that Francis Austen was named as tenant [defendant] in the writ of entry, but the indenture of bargain and sale to make him such a tenant was dated 21 April 1757 which was prior to the conversion of the equitable estates of the two Thomas Knights into legal estates by means of the fine on 24 April; and so the bargain and sale was made when Austen and the Thomas Knights had equitable interests, and the recovery was suffered when they had legal estates. This is difficult to understand as it differs in some respects from the situation according to the documents described above.[45] Without seeing further contemporary documents such as counsel's opinions it is impossible to be definite, but I understand them to be saying that the Thomas Knights should have waited until after 24 April when the fine was levied to enter into the bargain and sale (which stated that Hull would take recovery proceedings against Austen) since Austen did not hold the legal estate (which is all the Court of Common Pleas were interested in) until 24 April. On the other hand, it can be said that by the time the bargain and sale became effective on 24 April, Francis Austen did hold the full title, although the writ may have been issued before this but we do not know the date of issue. The Hintons' claim was an extreme technicality, which involved upsetting the previous court proceedings in 1757. It was certainly not an open and shut case. There was also potential for the Court of Common Pleas, whose only interest was the legal title, to have found in favour of the Hintons, and the Court of Chancery, who were more concerned with the beneficial interests, in favour of Edward; the latter would ultimately have prevailed. The Chancery Court was notoriously slow as readers of *Bleak House* will know, and it was no different at the earlier time we are considering; fighting the two cases would have cost a lot of money.

It was worth Edward settling the litigation by paying something to get rid of

the Hintons. He paid £15,000, which is a little over 10% of Edward's estimate of the value of the land.[46] I am not going to express a view on whether that was a good bargain on his part as this depended on what the attitude of the courts would have been if the cases had been fought. Negotiations had started with Edward offering £5,000.[47] The settlement terms were complicated and are dealt with in an Indenture of 18 April 1818, comprising eight large sheets of parchment and also requiring going to court for another fine and recovery at Edward's expense.[48] Edward's solicitor, Mr Seymour,[49] charged him £51 for the Chancery proceedings from May 1817 onwards (and there would have been earlier bills that I have not found as the dispute started in 1814), and £200 for the compromise agreement, on top of which would be counsel's fees.[50] There may also have been a different attorney (solicitors only practised in the Chancery Court) for the court of Common Pleas.

The consequence of an error in the 1757 proceedings would have been that on the death in 1794 of Thomas Knight (younger) without issue of his body, the land went to the next surviving beneficiary under Elizabeth Knight's will, John Knight Hinton (although he would have had the problem that he had not changed his name to Knight within three years of inheriting in which case the will provided that his interest 'shall cease and determine'), or to Jane Baverstock as Elizabeth Knight's heir at law (which did not depend on this requirement). It therefore seems unlikely that Hinton had a good case, but as they were acting together he was paid £5,000; Jane Baverstock, who had the better case, received £10,000.

Something that obviously concerned the Hintons was that Edward would use as a defence the 500-year rent-free lease to trustees, which was the mechanism for paying portions to the younger children of the marriage by mortgaging the lease, contained in the settlement he made on his eldest son in 1815 when his eldest's son's entail was barred. In fact Edward had no intention of using such a defence, but one can understand the Hintons' concern that they might achieve a pyrrhic victory of succeeding in showing that they had a better title to the freehold reversion to a rent-free 500-year lease.

Surprisingly, relations between the parties and their lawyers were remarkably friendly. Mrs Cassandra Austen wrote to Anna Lefroy in December 1814, 'we visit [Miss Hinton] as heretofore and are apparently as good Neighbours as we were before the tremendous Law-suit threatened us'.[51] When the actions were settled J.H. Baverstock (Mrs Baverstock's son who was masterminding the actions) wrote to Edward:

> it has ever been *our* object to effect a reasonable compromise rather than to disturb you in the possession of estates which you have for so many years considered your own. It has also been my most earnest desire to avoid, as much as possible, every thing that could be considered as having a tendency to hostility, and the extreme liberality and gentlemanly behaviour of Mr Seymour and the mutual confident understanding which have existed between him & my friend Mr Taylor give me reason to hope that you are satisfied on this front.[52]

Edward responded:

I trust and believe there can be but one opinion as to the manner in which it has been carried on and terminated far from any illiberal or personal hostility, such I am convinced has ever been your wish. Greatest credit to Seymour and Taylor for their moderation, their conduct has been highly honourable.[53]

J.H. Baverstock offered Edward more time to pay in a letter that crossed Edward's letter asking for it, and John Knight Hinton's solicitor agreed too.[54] The money was finally paid with some interest at the end of 1818, leaving Edward with an undisputed title to the land.

Acknowledgements. I am particularly grateful to Dr David Foster, University College London, who is the legal historian with the greatest knowledge of Chancery proceedings in this period, for corresponding with me about these matters when both of us had problems with understanding the documents until I found the final piece of the jigsaw (the document in n 38). I am also most grateful to Azar Hussain, and Professors Peter Sabor, Devoney Looser and Jan Fergus for their helpful comments on an earlier draft.

Notes

1. The expression used by Mrs Cassandra Austen in a letter in December 1814 to Anna Lefroy quoted in Deirdre Le Faye, Jane Austen A *Family Record*, 2nd ed CUP 2004, p.220; see text at n 50.
2. Formerly Austen. He changed his name to Knight in 1812 on the death of his adoptive mother Catherine. He was not under the same obligation to do so in Elizabeth Knight's will as his adoptive father had been because his interest derived under the procedure described from Thomas Knight (elder). Had he been under such obligation he would have needed to change his name within three years of Catherine giving up her life estate in 1798. When his son (also Edward Knight) barred his entail on 10 June 1815, the document stated that his father had changed his name by Letters Patent of 10 November 1812 as required by Elizabeth Knight's will, which was not the case.
3. *Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, by the Revd A.G. L'Estrange (Bentley, 1870) quoted in R.A. and W. Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen her Life and Letters* 1913 p.301.
4. Caroline Austen's *Reminiscences* (Jane Austen Society 2004 p.38) written in the 1870s says: 'I remember that the claim rested on their being able to prove the informality of the deed by which the entail had been cut off. One flaw was said to be that it had been executed out of term-time.' This is obviously wrong because the events took place in 1757 and barring an entail by disentailing deed did not start until 1833 (and after it started it would not matter if the deed were executed out of term time; before that it was a matter

of court proceedings that did not take place outside term time (and in this case an entail was not being barred)). The error has been copied by numerous commentators.

5. Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters* 4th ed. OUP 2011, Letter 98.
6. The dispute did not concern the land in Kent as this did not derive from the Knight family; Thomas Knight (elder) inherited it as a Brodnax. Some of the land in Hampshire was acquired by exchange for other land from Sir John Peachy Bart by Act of Parliament of 18 Geo 2, but nothing turns on this.
7. For information about her see Alison Daniell, 'Elizabeth Knight of Chawton (1674-1737): a Woman to be Reckoned With,' 2020 *Report* p.25.
8. The marriage articles are at HRO 18M61/BOX/B/1/1; 39M89/E/T16 appears to be a draft of this, and there is further information in 39M89/E/T18. Commonly marriage articles were entered into when there was not time to complete the marriage settlement before the marriage, which was necessary for its validity in order for the marriage to qualify as the consideration for it; the settlement containing in addition the powers of the trustees would be completed later. I have not found a copy of the settlement.
9. TNA PROB 11/688/170. The will is dated 8 April 1736, a codicil 24 February 1737, and the will was republished on 6 April 1737.
10. The name is derived from the French *taillé* meaning cut down.
11. The heir must not only be male but his interest must be traced solely through males.
12. Caroline Austen's *Reminiscences* (n 3) p.37 has the first two beneficiaries in the wrong order.
13. The relationship between them is set out in Christine Grover, 'Edward Knight's Inheritance: The Chawton, Godmersham, and Winchester Estates', *Persuasions On-Line* (2013) vol. 34 No. 1, and 'Pride, Prejudice, and the Threat to Edward Knight's Inheritance' *Persuasions On-Line* (2014) vol. 35 No. 1.
14. Elizabeth Knight's immediate heir was the Revd Edward Hinton whose only child was Martha Hinton, John Hinton's first wife; Jane Hinton (Baverstock) was their only child.
15. Further background information, in addition to the articles cited in n 13, is contained in Lord Brabourne, *Letters of Jane Austen* Vol. II, pp.219-220 which records a story that a 'Baverstoke' had a dream in which a Mr Knight told him that he was the rightful owner of the land; and in T.A.B. Corley, 'The Austen family, the Grays and the Baverstocks', *2010 Report* p.96.
16. There had also been earlier Chancery proceedings in 1741 in which Thomas Knight (elder) and the trustees of Elizabeth Knight's will were the claimants and the Revd Edward Hinton (1671-1746, Jane Baverstock's grandfather) the defendant. The pleadings consist of the claimants relying on Elizabeth Knight's will and Hinton's Answer saying that he was her heir (TNA C 11/1253/33). The proceedings do not seem to have continued but they demonstrate earlier dissatisfaction with Elizabeth Knight's will by the Hintons.

17. This was the abstract of title summarising the missing lease and release (n 38) which made clear that barring an entail was not involved.
18. By the Fines and Recoveries Act 1833. It is interesting that in the Colonies where the courts did not sit very often and they could not cope with the English procedures I am about to describe, barring entails by deed was adopted far earlier, 1707 in Antigua see J. Avery Jones, 'George Austen as a (nominal) trustee of a plantation in Antigua: the legal position', 2021 *Report*, pp.33, 37.
19. *De Donis Conditionalibus* 1285 (13 Ed 1 c 1). Before the Act a tenant in tail could sell the land and effectively eliminate the interests of his heirs (on the basis that on the birth of an heir the condition on which the land was held was considered to be satisfied); the Act prohibited this so that for all practical purposes the entail was created as a new estate that provided that heirs would definitely inherit; the problem then was that all the tenant in tail could sell was his life interest so that the land itself could never be sold. The Act therefore changed the law from one extreme to another, possibly worse, one, which the courts were willing to assist in evading. Henry Challis, *The law of Real Property*, 1896 New York Banks & Bros available on https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo1.ark:/13960/t3hx1ws1h&view=1up&seq=8&skin=2021 based on the 1885 English edition (London, Reeves and Turner) which sets out the earlier law because it was still necessary to the understanding of earlier titles p.39 (p.43 of the English edition).
20. Challis (n 21) p.225 (p.244 of the English edition). Lord Coke (1552-1634), barrister, judge and politician, was the leading jurist of his time.
21. Challis (n 21) p.225 onwards (p.244 onwards of the English edition). There is a fairly straightforward summary of the procedure in the University of Nottingham research guidance for fines: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/deedsindepth/freehold/finalconcord.aspx, and for recoveries: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/deedsindepth/freehold/commonrecovery.aspx.
22. This Francis Austen (1698-1791) was the brother of William Austen (1701-37) who was Jane Austen's grandfather. His second wife, Jane, was Jane Austen's godmother (Le Faye, *Chronology of Jane Austen*, 2nd ed, CUP 2013, 5 April 1776). Clifford's Inn was formerly an Inn of Chancery which by then had become an association of solicitors. Francis Austen was a benefactor of George Austen, purchasing for him, and presenting him to, the Deane living, and leaving him a legacy of £500. Francis Austen was a solicitor in Sevenoaks, a governor of Sevenoaks School, agent for the Knole Estate, and parliamentary agent for the Duke of Dorset. B. Keith-Lucas, 'Francis and Francis Motley Austen, Clerks of the Peace for Kent' in A. Detsicas and N. Yates, *Studies in Modern Kentish History,* Kent Archaeological Society, 1983.

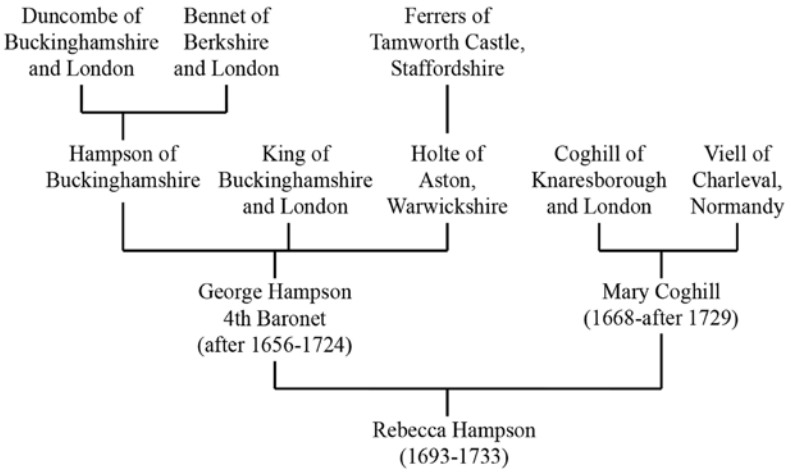
23. An attested copy made in 1840 of the deed of covenant dated 19 April 1757 is in HRO 17M48/130.
24. HRO 18M61/Box/A/13 for the Knights' part, one of the three originals; TNA CP 25/2/1203/30GEOIIEaster for the court's part (the 'foot of fine'), and there is also a draft of the latter in TNA CP 26/10/119 with a damaged bottom of the page; the third copy would be held by the Woodroffes. The parts were traditionally on the same piece of parchment and separated by cutting along a wavy line so that they would fit together thus preventing fraud. In this case it can be seen from photographs of each that they do not fit together probably because by this time lawyers were using parchment pre-cut in a wavy line to make it look as if they were separate parts of an original. I am grateful to David Rymill, the archivist at HRO, for this information about why the parts might not fit together.
25. Proclamations were made on 23 May, 29 June, 6 November 1757 and 13 February 1758 (endorsement on the 'foot of fine' in the Court's records in TNA CP 25/2/1262/30GeoIIEaster f 15).
26. HRO 18M61/BOX/EK/1/2. I have taken the date of enrolment from an abstract of title of William Deedes and Lewis Cage (as trustees of Thomas Knight (younger's) will) in HRO 5M52/T163 in preference to the 30 April date in the chronology in HRO 13M85W/41 which seems to have been prepared by Edward's lawyer in connection with the case brought by the Hintons, as the former is more likely to have been prepared carefully as it would be checked by the purchaser of the land.
27. The demandant (equivalent to the plaintiff in personal actions).
28. The action was for entry *sur disseisin en le post*.
29. 'Warrantied' (that word had to be used).
30. The 'common vouchee'.
31. Like Austen he was 'of Clifford's Inn'. Hull was the demandant (equivalent to the plaintiff in personal actions).
32. 'Vouched to warranty'.
33. The procedure is outlined in the bargain and sale and I have taken this summary from the actual recovery sealed by the Court and illustrated below which is more detailed.
34. 'Obtained leave to *imparl*' (have a discussion).
35. Though not in the direct male line as William's father inherited through his mother and changed his name to Chute (Le Faye, *Letters* (n 5), Biographical Notes p.506).
36. HRO 18M61/BOX/EK1/2/2 bundle 3.
37. TNA CP 43/696.
38. I am relying on the abstract of title in HRO 5M52/T163 (n 26) for this information as I have not found the original documents. A lease and release was another way of transferring land; the technical reason for the procedure was that the lease created a legal estate in favour of the tenant which did not require enrolment in the court and which could be enlarged by a release.

39. Unlike Elizabeth Knight's will which was restricted to sons, neither the bargain and sale nor, according to the abstract of title, the lease and release (see previous note) says *male* heirs of his body and so this is a tail general which can pass to either male or female heirs of his body (not that there were any such heirs).
40. TNA PROB 11/1076/160.
41. Regardless of the validity of the earlier procedure his life interest was valid.
42. TNA C 13/2130/15.
43. A Demurrer accepts the truth of the fact pleaded in the Bill of Complaint but says that this is not sufficient in law for the action to succeed. Jane Austen's letter of 17-18 October 1815 written from Henry's house in Hans Place to Cassandra, mentions that Edward was 'likely to come here on Tuesday next [24 October] for a day or two's necessary business in his Cause'. (Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters* 4th ed OUP 2011, Letter 121, p.305). This would be the finalisation of his Demurrer and Answer.
44. On the top of the first page of the Bill of Complaint is written 'Amended by [illegible] Dated 22 May 1816'.
45. The fine did not convert the Thomas Knights' equitable estates into legal estates; the fine was solely between the Woodroffes and Austen. Nor did they hold legal estates when the recovery was suffered as this was held by Hall on trust for them under the lease and release of 27 and 28 April (n 38), although it is likely that Hall transferred legal estates to them subsequent to the recovery.
46. Linda Slothouber, *Jane Austen, Edward Knight & Chawton*, Woodpigeon Publishing 2015, p.23 quotes Edward as valuing the land at £140,000 in 1818. The rent from the land in that year was £4,439 (p.20).
47. Letter of 11 December 1817 from Seymour (Edward's solicitor) to Edward in HRO 18M61/Box/H/13.
48. 18M61/Box/H/13. Documents relating to that recovery are at HRO 18M61/BOX/A/4/1.
49. For information about him see Le Faye, 'Jane Austen's Laggard Suitor,' *Notes and Queries*, September 2000 p.301, with some information about his subsequent life in D. Looser 'The ABCs of *Northanger Abbey*: Advertisements, Backstories, and Classifications', *Persuasions On-Line*, vol. 40 No..1 (2019).
50. HRO 39M89/E/T140.
51. Quoted in *Jane Austen A Family Record* (see n 3) p.220.
52. Letter of 23 April 1818 from J.H. Baverstock to Edward in HRO 18M61/Box/H/13.
53. Letter of 25 April 1818 in HRO 18M61/Box/H/13.
54. Various letters of 18 September 1818 to 18 October 1818 between Edward, J.H. Baverstock, John Knight Hinton and his solicitor Lee in HRO 18M61/Box/H/13.

George Austen's Maternal Ancestry

Ronald Dunning

For the 2020 *Annual Report* I wrote an article on what is currently known of Rebecca Hampson, George Austen's mother, and of her two husbands, William Walter and William Austen. This present article takes the investigation further into Rebecca's earlier family, and thus into George Austen's maternal ancestry. Unlike the Austens of West Kent, Rebecca's family were from counties west of London and the more northerly Warwickshire and Yorkshire. Like the Austens, all were commoners, with but one exception. The Hampsons are perhaps the most straightforward; the families of some of their wives offer more surprises.


Duncombe of Buckinghamshire and London
Bennet of Berkshire and London
Ferrers of Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire
Hampson of Buckinghamshire
King of Buckinghamshire and London
Holte of Aston, Warwickshire
Coghill of Knaresborough and London
Viell of Charleval, Normandy
George Hampson 4th Baronet (after 1656-1724)
Mary Coghill (1668-after 1729)
Rebecca Hampson (1693-1733)

Nicholas and Sir Robert Hampson, sixteenth to early-seventeenth centuries
Rebecca's third-great-grandfather Nicholas Hampson of Bradwell (now Broadwell), in Oxfordshire, is the earliest known to us, because his son Robert requested in his Will that

> my body shall be conveyed . . . unto Bradwell in the county of Oxon and to be laid out and buried in the chancel in the parish church there as near the place where my late father Nicholas Hampson lieth buried as conveniently may be.

Robert's will was written in March 1605 and proved on 22 June 1607. He was not buried at Bradwell, but at St-Mary-at-Hill in London, one of the scores of churches destroyed in 1666 by the great fire of London. The historian John Stow had transcribed Robert's mural monument on the wall of the chancel before the fire, noting that he was in his seventieth year. This suggests a birth date, allowing for the absence of other records, in the late 1530s.

Nicholas Hampson's lifetime was lived entirely within the Tudor era, while Robert's life bridged the final years of Henry VIII to the earliest of James I. He spent his adult life in London, was a citizen and member of the Merchant Taylors' Company, and served as alderman (Cripplegate 1597-1602, Dowgate 1602-7), and Sheriff of London (1598). He was granted heraldic arms by the College of Arms on 10 October 1602, and knighted (along with many others) by James I at Whitehall 26 July 1603.

Sir Thomas Hampson, 1st Baronet

Robert's wife Katherine was the daughter of John Good, another citizen of London and member of the Merchant Taylors. Their son Thomas Hampson was baptised at St Mary-le-Bow in London on 14 September 1589, matriculated from Oriel College Oxford in 1606, and was recorded at Gray's Inn, one of London's principal legal inns, in 1609. Little is known of his activities besides serving as Justice of the Peace, and Master of the Statute Office. Thomas's significance in the family history is the fact that he was granted a baronetcy by Charles I, on 3 June 1642, to become Sir Thomas Hampson, 1st Baronet. It is not common knowledge that baronetcies were awarded not for service to the state or for acts of courage and selflessness, but on payment of a great fee which went directly into the royal coffers. Note, however, that the English Civil War began soon after Sir Thomas's grant, on 22 August 1642. Not surprisingly, Parliament disallowed all recent baronetcies in November 1643. They were reinstated only with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660.

The Duncombes and Allied Families

Sir Thomas's wife Anne, whom he married in 1616, was the daughter of William Duncombe of St Lawrence Jewry, London, and of Much Brickhill, Buckinghamshire. Presumably William was also a merchant, and citizen of London. Anne's mother Anne (or Agnes) was the daughter of Thomas Bennet, a member of the Company of Mercers. Thomas Bennet held various posts in the government of London, culminating in his election as Lord Mayor for one year from the autumn of 1603. Queen Elizabeth I had died just months earlier, on 24 March 1603, and he accompanied James I on his first entry as king into London. He was subsequently knighted by James, with seventeen other Aldermen, at Whitehall on 26 July 1603. Sir Thomas, as he became, was noted for his charity. During his Mayoralty the plague continued in London, and is stated (in his funeral certificate) to have occurred there before, during his time as Sheriff [1594-95]:

> as also his last and greatest visitacion at what tyme he remained only the Father and Protector of all the comfortless inhabitants of that cittie in all their extremitie, to his immortal praise; and example of pietie and fortytude.

He survived the plague, and died on 16 February 1627.

It is a remarkable coincidence that two Austen ancestors were not only Lord Mayors of London, but also serving at the beginning of the reigns of subsequent monarchs. Sir Thomas Leigh, a fourth-great-grandfather of Cassandra Leigh (Mrs George Austen), was elected just before the death of Queen Mary in November 1558. He proclaimed Elizabeth as Queen at the market cross on Cheapside, and at other points in the city, and acted as butler (an honorary function) at her coronation banquet in Westminster Hall in January 1559. Yet another, earlier Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Marrow, elected for 1455, was the ancestor of both Mr and Mrs Austen. Through his son Thomas, a Sergeant-at-Law, and his great-great-granddaughter Dorothy Ferrers, who is featured later in this article, he was an ancestor of George Austen. Through his daughter Katherine he was an ancestor of the Leighs and thus of Cassandra Leigh.

We return now to the Duncombes. One of Anne's younger sisters, Elizabeth, married William Brownlow of Humby in Lincolnshire, the second of the baronets. His baronetcy was granted on 27 July 1641 and, like that of Thomas Hampson, was disallowed by Parliament for the duration of the Civil War and Commonwealth. One of William and Elizabeth Brownlow's great-granddaughters, Alice Brownlow, married Francis North, 2nd Baron Guilford; and that couple's grandchildren included Frederick North, 2nd Earl of Guilford and Prime Minister, and his half-brother Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester. Through their mutual descent from the Duncombes, George Austen and his bishop were fourth cousins once removed.

Alice's sister Jane Brownlow married Peregrine Bertie, 2nd Marquess of Lindsey. This couple's daughter Jane married General Edward Mathew, and their daughter Anne Mathew was the first of James Austen's two wives. Anne was the second cousin of Brownlow North, and they may have known that, but it is very unlikely that she and James knew that they too were distantly related as fifth cousins, or that James was related to his bishop to the same degree.

George Hampson MD (1627-1677)

We will leave that tangle of relationships behind. Returning to the Hampsons, George Hampson (the elder), Doctor of Medicine, was the son of Sir Thomas Hampson and Anne Duncombe. As fourth son, he had no expectation of inheriting the baronetcy; his brother Sir Thomas, 2nd Baronet, had at least three sons. George left little impression in the records, apart from an entry in the registers of St Andrew's Church, Holborn:

An agreement & intent of Marriage betweene George Hampson gent. and Grace Holt spinster, both of Andrewes Holborne, was published in Newgate Markett, On three Markett Dayes & in three severall weekes (vidlt.) on the 26th and on the 28th Dayes of January & on the 4th Daye of February 1655.

The date of the ceremony is not given.

Edward Holte, supporter of Charles I

The family of George Hampson's wife, Grace Holte, takes us on another detour into maternal lineage. Grace's father Edward Holte was a Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles I. He attended King Charles during the Civil War and, on 23 October 1642, fought at the Battle of Edgehill where he was wounded, but recovered. In August 1643 he fought again, in the defence of Oxford. While there he caught a fever, from which he did not recover. Grace's mother, Elizabeth King, was the sister of friends of Edward at Oxford; no doubt that is how they met. Their fathers, Thomas Holte of Aston in Warwickshire, 1st Baronet, and John King, Bishop of London, were both significant characters.

Sir Thomas Holte (1571-1654) of Aston Hall.
Artist unknown. Birmingham Museums Trust.

Sir Thomas Holte and the early Stuarts

Sir Thomas Holte came from a long established Warwickshire family, and increased his estate by marrying well, to Grace Bradburne, the daughter of William Bradburne of Hough, Derbyshire. Thomas was Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1599, and in 1603 was a member of a deputation to welcome James I who, soon afterwards on 18 April 1603, knighted him. He was created a baronet on 25 November 1612, in the second year of the title's existence. During the late 1620s and early 1630s he built Aston Hall, a grand mansion still standing just to the

north of the centre of Birmingham. Such was his esteem at the Stuart court that Charles I wanted to appoint him ambassador to Spain, but Sir Thomas declined on the plea of advanced age. Throughout the Civil War he gave his support to Charles who, with his army, rested at Aston for two nights in October 1642. For that, rebels plundered his house and estate and briefly held him prisoner. Damage to a balustrade on Aston Hall's main staircase, caused by cannon shot, is still visible.

A family quarrel and an anecdote suggest that Sir Thomas was a person who expected to have his own way. He disapproved of his son Edward's marriage so strongly that he was determined to disinherit him. King Charles sent a letter gently urging him to reconsider. Of course, Sir Thomas had no choice but to comply, but records suggest that Edward never regained his father's affections. The anecdote concerns a hunting expedition with friends. On the way home, Sir Thomas laid a wager that his cook could serve them a feast in very short order. The cook was, unfortunately, running late. Sir Thomas, enraged by the jeers of his companions, hastened into the kitchen, seized the first article at hand, and avenged himself. (I will spare gentle readers from further details.) Afterwards he sought to conceal the deed, in spite of the evidence of witnesses. The case was brought to trial but resulted in acquittal – he had clearly murdered his servant, but the charge had been worded inadequately.

Sir Thomas's mother, Dorothy Ferrers, was the daughter of John Ferrers of Tamworth Castle. This family were a junior branch of the noble Ferrers, descended from Henry de Ferrières, the master of farriers in William the Conqueror's invading army. In their lineage, the Tamworth Ferrers could also be traced back to King Edward I. Thus Jane Austen and her siblings had royal ancestry on both sides, their mother having descent from Edward III through his son John of Gaunt.

Revd John King, Bishop of London

Sir Thomas's daughter-in-law Elizabeth King, whose choice as bride caused the estrangement between his son Edward and himself, was the daughter of the Revd John King. He was born at his family's home in Worminghall, Buckinghamshire, in the mid-1550s. The expense of his education at Westminster School was supported by two relations: his great-uncle Robert King, who had been the Abbot of Oseney and Thame in Oxfordshire, and then the first Bishop of Oxford, and John Williams, Lord Williams of Thame, who also had family and professional connections with Thomas Cromwell. John King's family contacts served him well. On graduating BA from Christ Church, Oxford, he was presented not just to the London parish of St Anne and St Agnes, but also to a prebend at Windsor. He served as domestic chaplain to John Piers, formerly the dean of Christ Church, when Piers was appointed Bishop of Salisbury in 1577, and followed him when he was elevated to Archbishop of York in 1589.

After Piers's death in 1594 John King joined the London household of Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper (a noted patron of evangelical clergy) as chaplain. At York he had gained a reputation as a powerful orator, and in London

he established himself as one of the city's foremost preachers, noted for Calvinist orthodoxy, moral rectitude, and strident anti-Catholicism. Such was his renown that he was selected to deliver the first Sunday sermon at court after the death of Queen Elizabeth.

Soon after King James's arrival in London he made John King one of his chaplains in ordinary, punning on his name by calling him 'the king of preachers'. Two years later, in 1605, the king appointed him Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and then Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1607 to 1610. On 8 September 1611 he was consecrated Bishop of London. He didn't relinquish his commitment to preaching following his elevation; not only did he continue to speak at court and at Paul's Cross (the open-air pulpit beside St Paul's Cathedral), but endeavoured to give a sermon somewhere in the diocese every Sunday morning. His position as Bishop ended only with his death on 30 March 1621.

There is much more to say about John King but not in this article, beyond two further details. John Donne, poet and cleric – and a distant cousin of Mrs Austen, as I reported in the article 'Sir Thomas More and Jane Austen' in the *Annual Report* for 2019 – was one of John King's colleagues in the household of Thomas Egerton, and remained an intimate friend afterwards. John Donne had been born into a Catholic family but gradually turned away from the faith, and on 23 January 1615, Bishop King ordained him deacon and priest at St Paul's.

Pocahontas, the daughter of the paramount chief of the Powhatan people in Virginia, had been captured by English colonists in 1613. She married the tobacco planter John Rolfe and in 1616 travelled with him to England, where she became a celebrity. On Twelfth Night, 1617, she attended a masque at Whitehall, devised by Ben Johnson and costumed by Inigo Jones, and later that year was a guest at a reception at Lambeth Palace. The clergyman Samuel Purchas reported

> I was present when my Honorable and Reverend Patron, the L. Bishop of London, Doctor King entertained her with festival state and pompe, beyond what I have seene in his great hospitalitie afforded to other Ladies.

Sir George Hampson (the younger) MD and 4th Baronet

Rebecca Hampson's father George Hampson MD, the son of the earlier George Hampson MD, was born sometime before 1677. He inherited the baronetcy late in his life, on the death in 1719 of his unmarried cousin Sir Dennis Hampson, 3rd Baronet. It is likely that he knew it would come to him if he outlived Sir Dennis, but he enjoyed the title for only five years before his death in 1724.

The Coghills

Sir George's wife, and Rebecca's mother, was Mary Coghill, of Bletchingdon in Oxfordshire. Mary's grandfather Sir Thomas Coghill was born in London in 1604 to John Coghill and his wife Susannah Viell. The source of Sir Thomas's wealth isn't clear, but he was able to leave London and purchase the estate at Bletchingdon. He served as Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1633 and, in August of that

year, was knighted at Woodstock by Charles I.

John Coghill had been born at the family seat, Coghill Hall in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where the family can be traced back to the 1300s. Being a fourth son he left the family estates to seek his fortune, and established himself in London as a citizen and barber-surgeon. His wife Susannah's family are interesting. It appears that the Viell surname was rooted in the West Country; I imagine that it should be pronounced Veal, or perhaps Vile. Susannah was baptised at St Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange in London on 30 March 1568, but her grandfather, John Viell, had travelled to France as a soldier in Henry VIII's army, and settled there. The Visitation of London for 1633-35 records the following:

John Viell borne in Gloucestersheire went into ffrance with King Henry the 8 he was an ensigne to a company anno 1513 he lived at Charleval in Normandy where by mariage [to Judith, daughter of Andrew Perigott of Paris] and purchase he possessed lands to the valew of 103li. p. ann sterling.

John Viell's son Dennis, Susannah's father, had to leave France, as also recorded in the Visitation:

Dennis Viell in Normandy borne at Charleval left his country for religion and thereby his landes confiscate to the King he came into England and lived a merchant in London he died aged 92 yeres anno 1608.

If any of these people strike the reader as surprising, what follows will perhaps surpass the rest: Sir Christopher Wren was, by marriage to Rebecca Hampson's great-aunt Faith Coghill, her great-uncle, and thus a great-great-great-uncle of Jane Austen. His father Dr Christopher Wren D.D. had, along with other appointments, been Chaplain to Charles I from 1628, and Dean of Windsor from 1635. When Parliamentary forces occupied Windsor Castle in 1642 he refused to give them the keys to St George's Chapel. Although he survived this act of defiance, it became clear that he had to remove himself and his family to the country. They settled at Bletchingdon in the following year when his daughter Susan married the vicar, Dr William Holder. The younger Christopher, who was born in October 1632, was then eleven years of age, and Faith Coghill, born in 1636 at Bletchingdon, was just seven. They had known one another from late childhood.

Conclusions

Almost everyone in this article was an ancestor of George Austen, and thus of Jane. Did she know about them? I believe that she didn't, not even about the Bennets or Ferrers. She left no record, at least none that has survived, that she did. There is no mention of a written family pedigree in the Austen library. In families that had them they were usually valued as precious documents, to be preserved and copied as families branched. Conventionally, written pedigrees and family trees recorded male lines, but most often added just the men's wives and possibly their fathers. I felt that this was the case with the Hampsons in volumes of the

baronetage and in Austen biographies. I wanted, in writing this article, to feature the women's families.

By the way, the spellings – a single final 't' in Bennet (as notably in the Bennet family of *Pride and Prejudice*), and Ferrers rather than Ferrars – are irrelevant. The single 't' form of Bennet was very common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the alternative endings of Ferrers and Ferrars exemplify the fact that spelling was very fluid at the time.

We might ask whether knowledge of forebears had trickled down to Jane's contemporary Hampson cousins. Sir Thomas Philip Hampson, 7th Baronet (1765-1820), features in seven of her surviving letters from London as a dining companion and party guest. No doubt he met Jane and her brothers on other occasions, but the letters do not record their conversations. Sir George Hampson and his wife Mary Coghill, their mutual great-grandparents and most recent common ancestors, lived three generations before them. Dorothy Ferrers, their fifth-great-grandmother and last of their Ferrers ancestors, died in 1594. Sir Thomas Bennet, a fifth-great-grandfather, was born around 1550 and died in 1627. Both lived two centuries before Jane and Sir Thomas Philip, and were in maternal ancestral lines of maternal lines.

Many of us know something of our great-grandparents, and even sometimes of great-great-grandparents. Earlier than that, and we need a written record. The ancestors in this article may not have been familiar to Jane Austen, yet I am fully persuaded that they illustrate the fact that her descent was through generations of successful families, and from some of the most distinguished people in English society.

The Gray Family and Alton

Jane Hurst

Most lovers of Jane Austen who have read about her life and that of her family will be familiar with the surname of Gray. Jane's brother Henry was a partner in the bank of Austen, Gray and Vincent where the *Gray* was Edward William Gray and the *Vincent* was William Vincent – Edward's uncle.

The Gray family came from Newbury, Berkshire, where they had held important social positions for several generations. Edward's father, Joseph was a cheesemonger and grain merchant and was elected Mayor twice. Joseph and his wife, Ruth, had a large number of children, of whom several died young.

The first one of the Gray family to have been mentioned in Alton was the eldest son, George, who was admitted to a property in the High Street (now no. 21) on 17 August 1802.[1] The site had a long history as one of Alton's four medieval inns – the White Hart – and the building had been here from the early 1500s. In about 1770, the premises had ceased to be an inn and had become a dwelling. It lay in the sub-manor of Truncheaunts, of which the Knights of Chawton were lords although, at this period, their Hampshire estates were looked after by their steward, Bridger Seward.[2]

When acquired by George Gray, the Alton building was still in the form of a medieval galleried inn around a courtyard. Although old-fashioned, it would have had the advantage of being large and, presumably, with reasonable storage space as well, there being a meadow at the back.

Having done the negotiating, George did not come to Alton to live. Instead, his younger brothers Frederick and Charles Henry took up residence here. Both were aged about twenty and were set up in the same business as their father, as cheesemongers and corn merchants or mealmen. As such, they were merchants who bought cheese and corn in bulk from farmers and then supplied various outlets.

Gradually the brothers settled into local life and were recorded in the Land Tax as being the owners of their home, although it legally belonged to George until he died in the 1830s.[3] After being in Alton only two years, Frederick became one of the Overseers of the Workhouse and, a few months later, he and Charles had 'the Seats N1 and 2 at the Entrance of the Great Door [of St Lawrence's Church] on the Right Hand, [which] were with the Consent of the then Churchwardens erected where no seats ever were before, at the sole Expense viz N1 of Messrs Frederick & Charles Gray'.[4]

By 1806, younger brother Edward William Gray must have moved to Alton, as that is the year that he joined Henry Austen in his Alton bank. Its first location was at no. 10 High Street, which was only a short distance from the home of the Grays at no. 21 High Street.

Presumably Edward lived with his brothers Frederick and Charles when first

in Alton. The Poll Book of that year confirms that they were in Alton and able to vote there, while eldest brother George also had a vote, but still resided in Newbury.

At this time, Jane Austen, her mother and sister were living in Southampton but must have been aware of the Grays. In a letter dated 7-9 October 1808, Jane wrote that 'we had a pheasant & hare the other day from the Mr Grays of Alton'. A year later, in April, Frederick married Mary Anne Clement at St Lawrence's Church in Alton. The bride was the daughter of Thomas Clement, an Alton solicitor, and sister of the Henry Clement who joined Henry Austen in his banking venture in nearby Petersfield. Sadly, the former Henry was to die in the Virgin Islands in 1821, where he was acting as Collector of Customs.

In the same year that Frederick and Mary Anne married, his brother Charles died, but the couple soon filled their home with children. Baptised in Alton on the following dates, they were: Charles Henry, 1811; Frederick Clement, 1813; Henry Richard, 1813; Jane White, 1817 (born 1815); Richard Thomas Clement, 1817; Edward William, 1819; Joseph Alfred, 1821; James Tinsley, 1823; and Emma Maria, 1824.

The large building on the right replaced the home of the Gray family. The first position of the Bank was on the left at the top of the hill and the second position is shown on the immediate left-hand side.

In March 1809, an auction was advertised in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 'A Substantial Newly-erected and Well-arranged Dwelling-house, with requisite Offices, situate in the centre of the High-street of the town of Alton' together with the adjoining dwelling house 'under the same roof' as a separate lot. These properties replaced previous buildings that had been pulled down 'for the purpose

of widening of the High Street of Alton' made necessary by the increased traffic on the turnpike through the town.[5]

It is possible that the property did not sell immediately, as it was not until October 1811 that 'All those two newly erected messuages, tenements, etc. and the newly erected warehouses adjoining and the two newly erected houses' were conveyed to Edward William Gray of Alton, banker, 'for £1000, subject to sundry trusts and a quit rent of 1/6 to the Lord of the Manor of Alton Eastbrook' (Edward Austen Knight).[6] Sadly, these two elegant houses have since been demolished and replaced by nos 34a – 34d High Street.

A year later, Edward Gray took on extra premises behind the bank which were described as 'a messuage with 2 tenements and all that tanyard, outhouses, etc.' from Jane's brother Edward on a lease of three lives – which were the lives of the lessee, aged twenty-two; William Clement, aged twenty-one; and William Miles, son of Moses Miles of Berkshire, aged twenty-one.[7] The manorial fine was £100.

Meanwhile, in 1810, James Baverstock insured a storeroom behind cheesemonger Frederick Gray's home. Those who have followed Jane's brother Edward's financial problems will be familiar with the name of Baverstock. The family arrived in Alton in the 1730s to be innholders of the George before moving to the Swan. As well as the inn, they ran the brewery behind it and, eventually, built their own in Turk Street. Presumably they needed extra storage at this time.

The brewery of James Hinton Baverstock is on the left, The tower was added by the Crowleys after they bought the premises in 1821 following his bankruptcy.

Also in Turk Street was Mrs Alexander's Ladies' Boarding School where orphan Sarah Newman was a servant. She wrote a book of poems – *'Poems, on Subjects*

Connected with Scripture' – which was printed and published in 1811 by William Pinnock, the Librarian of the Alton Book Society to which Jane Austen belonged.[8] Among the subscribers to the book were Edward William Gray, Charles Newnham (the apothecary/surgeon about whom Jane wrote 'Lines to Maria Beckford'), B.H. Coleby (from whom Jane ordered a cloak) and Miss Prowting of Chawton (who is mentioned in Jane's letters). No doubt there would have been a copy of the book in the Alton Book Society's bookcase – did Jane ever borrow it?

1812 saw the final relocation of Henry Austen and Edward Gray's Bank with 2 June being the last time that they paid the Poor Rate for both the old (no. 10) and the new (no. 34) premises in the High Street. Presumably, Edward lived above the bank rather than across the road with his brother Frederick and his growing family.

Frederick seems at this time to have been a member, along with other local people, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). Among those listed as being from the Alton deanery were the Revd John Benn, rector of Farringdon; Mr F. Gray, cheesefactor of Alton; Harry Digweed, Esq.; and William Prowting, Esq., of Chawton. All were known to Jane Austen.[9]

Around 1814, there were disputes about who had which pews in Alton's St Lawrence Church and so a new list and a plan were drawn up in 1815, together with notes. Frederick Gray was listed as having Pew 52 and it was reported that

> The pews Nos 50 and 52 were entirely built by Messrs Marshall and Gray, by and with the consent of the present and former Churchwardens and at their whole and sole expense on ground whereon a pew never stood before, therefore Messrs M and G have a prescription right to the now and hereafter according to the ecclesiastical law, which says that pews may go from house to house by prescription and immemorial usage.
> Two pews on the left hand side of the landing on going into the singing gallery, one a small one, the other large, were erected in like manner by Messrs John Andrews and E W Gray, and to which they have the like claim. This small addition to the singing gallery was made entirely by Messrs Andrews and Gray at their private expense.[10]

So, although he had not married, Edward had his own pew and did not share brother Frederick's.

It was later this year that 'E.W. Gray of Alton, banker, dealer and chapman' was declared a bankrupt. On 21 October 1815, the *Hampshire Chronicle* stated that

> The Lord Chancellor having, on hearing the Petition of several of the Creditors of Edward William Gray, late of Alton, Banker, by his order directed that Frederick Gray, James Hinton Baverstock, and John Andrews, the present Assignees of the said Bankrupt, should be removed, and other proper persons appointed in their stead; and also directed that the Commissioners should inquire whether any and what undue preferences (by way of payments) have been made by the bankrupt.[11]

It was not until May 1817 that the Bank premises came up for auction. The

description in the *Hampshire Chronicle* gives a good idea of the layout:

Two valuable FREEHOLD HOUSES, elegantly situated in the centre of the town of Alton, late in the occupation of Mr. E.W. Gray, Banker, and Samuel Smith, Esq. each containing two parlours, drawing-room, four bed-rooms, two attics, large kitchen, wash-house, cellar, and pantry; together with a small garden and convenient outbuildings. These Premises have been rebuilt within a few years, are in a perfect state of repair, and fit for the immediate reception of genteel families. … Also a newly erected COACH-HOUSE, four-stall STABLE, and large GARDEN, well stocked with fruit trees, adjoining the above Premises. The Coach-house and Stable are now in the occupation of James Battin Coulthard, Esq. as tenant at will at the yearly rent of £13. These Premises are held under a lease granted by Edward Austen, Esq. Lord of the Manor of Alton Eastbrook, for 99 years, from the 10th of January, 1812, if three persons therein named shall so long live.

Edward Gray returned to Newbury where he became Mayor in 1839 and published books on the local area while his brother Frederick stayed in Alton. The latter was slowly acquiring land including some whose deeds also mentioned his sister Maria. The growing of hops in the Farnham and Alton areas was spreading and many people were investing in the crop. When picked and dried, the hops would be pressed into sacks called pockets made of sewn up pieces of sacking.

Hop pocket sack is stamped for hops belonging to Frederick Gray, Alton, 1822. Presumably there was not a good enough crop that season for this to be needed.

In 1825, a group of 'dealers in and growers of hops, in the parishes and neighbourhood of Alton, being desirous of establishing an annual fair for the sale of hops do hereby give notice that a fair will be held for that purpose on

Thursday 29th Sept. next in the Market House at Alton'. One of the group was Frederick Gray, together with James Snelling the watch and clock maker and Charles Trimmer the attorney. Frederick not only owned hop land, he also rented some, as, in June 1828, 'a first rate hop plantation, in full pole, 13 acres situated near Alton Butts, in the occupation of Mr Gray' came up for auction. He also had a hop kiln with six oasts.

Frederick seems to have had an interest in horticulture as well. The *Hampshire Chronicle* of 5 July 1830 reported that 'Mr Gray, of Alton, has now growing in his garden, a most singular thistle, of the enormous height of 10ft, and nearly 8ft in circumference. It is now just blowing, and well worth the attention of anyone. Rare plants have often been seen in this gentleman's garden.' He still gave his occupation as 'cheesefactor' though.

The mid-1830s were a sad time for Frederick. His brother George died. The will mentions his sister Maria (who never married) and his brother Edward William – both of whom were left their homes. The residue (including Frederick's home in Alton) was left in trust to son George, sister Maria, brother Edward William and brother-in-law Edward Sarney.

The ownership of Frederick's home (no. 21 High Street) was transferred to his son Frederick Clement Gray, who had become a surgeon in London and elsewhere before settling in Newmarket. His father, Frederick, was still in Alton in 1841 together with his wife Mary Ann and several of his children, including four sons who all classed themselves as 'merchants'. Four years later, his son Frederick Clement sold the former inn to Henry Hall the brewer who rebuilt it and Mary Ann and Frederick moved away – presumably to live with their children. Mary Ann died in 1846 in Essex and Frederick a year later in Middlesex. And so ended the forty-five-year association between Alton and the Gray family.

Notes

1. HRO 79M78/B222.
2. *Alton's Inns*, Jane Hurst, 2004.
3. *History of Alton*, William Curtis, 1896.
4. *Alton MS II*, S.A. Warner, copy held at the Curtis Museum, Alton.
5. HRO 79M78/B222.
6. Royal Exchange policy no.252930 7253/62.
7. *Alton's Breweries*, Jane Hurst, 2012.
8. *Poems, on Subjects Connected with Scripture*, Sarah Newman, 1811.
9. Jane Austen and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, *Persuasions* No. 34, Jocelyn Harris.
10. *History of Alton*, William Curtis, 1896.
11. The bankruptcy has been described in great detail elsewhere, such as in *Jane Austen – The Banker's Sister* – by E.J. Clery. London: Biteback Publishing, 2017.

Jane Austen's 'Orchard in Blossom' – Revisited

Azar Hussain

Did Jane Austen make mistakes? This will no doubt sound like heresy to many, but it is a question that has occupied much of the critical literature concerning Austen's work. In the *Memoir* of 1870, her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh stated, 'She was always very careful not to meddle with matters which she did not thoroughly understand. She never touched upon politics, law or medicine, subjects which some novel writers have ventured on rather too boldly, and have treated, perhaps, with more brilliancy than accuracy.'[1] However, a number of errors, or at least inconsistencies, have been pointed out, such as the curious changing of Pug's sex in *Mansfield Park*,[2] the mistaken year of Lady Elliot's death in *Persuasion*[3] and the orchard in blossom at around midsummer in *Emma*. In what follows, I have chosen to focus on this last 'mistake' which has perhaps received more attention than any other and which Mary Lascelles, when writing of Austen's care and attention to detail, has described as 'the one error detected'.[4] The passage in question occurs during the strawberry party at Donwell Abbey, 'Under a bright mid-day sun, at almost Midsummer', and is as follows:

> There had been a time also when Emma would have been sorry to see Harriet in a spot so favourable for the Abbey-Mill Farm; but now she feared it not. It might be safely viewed with all its appendages of prosperity and beauty, its rich pastures, spreading flocks, orchard in blossom, and light column of smoke ascending.[5]

Deirdre Le Faye notes in her *Family Record* that Austen's brother Edward, on account of this passage, is reported to have said to her, 'Jane, I wish you would tell me where you get those apple-trees of yours that come into bloom in July'.[6] As we will see, Edward's statement has been frequently quoted and discussed in the literature on Austen, but before examining this statement in closer detail, it is worth investigating its source. We know that Austen collected a number of opinions on *Emma*, mainly from family and friends, but Edward's comment is not among them.[7] Le Faye's source is Walter Herries Pollock's *Jane Austen: Her Contemporaries and Herself*.[8] Pollock quotes from an article published by his father in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1860 where he has also drawn attention to this supposed slip, stating:

> In another place in the same novel Miss Austen's accuracy may be impeached with more probability of success; for, 'in the middle of June,' or rather 'at almost Midsummer,' strawberries are described as being eaten from the beds in the gardens of Donwell Abbey, while the orchard is in blossom at the neighbouring Abbey Mill-Farm – an anachronism – which we have never met with any horticulturist able to explain by bringing together even the earliest and latest varieties of apple and strawberry.[9]

The younger Pollock quotes this passage from his father, but then continues, 'With regard to this I find, on the fly-leaf at the end of the volume in which the article on 'British Novelists' is bound up, the following copy, in my father's handwriting, of a letter written by Miss Caroline Austen, niece to Jane':

> Ferog Firle. (sic) MY DEAREST CHARLOTTE,[10] – There is a tradition in the family respecting the apple-blossom as seen from Donwell Abbey on the occasion of the strawberry party, and it runs thus – That the first time my uncle Knight [this was the first Mr. Edward Knight of Chawton House] saw his sister after the publication of 'Emma' he said, 'Jane, I wish you would tell me where you get those apple-trees of yours that come into bloom in July'. In truth she did make a mistake – there is no denying it – and she was speedily apprised of it by her brother – but I suppose it was not thought of sufficient consequence to call for correction in a later edition.[11]

Pollock does not state how his father came across Caroline's letter, but there were a number of possible routes. Pollock's mother was Juliet Pollock (1819-1899), herself a writer who had reviewed James Edward Austen-Leigh's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* in 1870 for *St Paul's Magazine*, at the request of Anthony Trollope.[12] Juliet Pollock's mother was Catherine Creed, the Mrs Creed whose opinion on *Mansfield Park* was recorded by Jane Austen. Catherine's maiden name was Herries, and the Isabella Herries whose opinion of *Emma* was also noted, was her sister.[13] Perhaps the Pollock family had seen Caroline's letter through one of these connections. Although the source of Edward's statement may be unclear, the point is a fair one, so how can we explain it? A number of Austen's commentators have just described it as an error. The *Life and Letters* of 1913 describes it as 'One of our author's few inaccuracies'[14] and Le Faye referred to it in the *Family Record* as a 'little slip'.[15] R.W. Chapman stated that it was 'one of Miss Austen's very rare mistakes of its kind'[16] and David Gilson synthesized the last two opinions by calling it a 'rare slip'.[17] However, Fiona Stafford describes it in the Penguin Classics edition as 'A notorious "mistake"'[18] and Adela Pinch uses the same word in the Oxford World's Classics edition stating, 'Austen notoriously erred in having the orchard still in blossom at strawberry-harvesting time'.[19] By 2005 the Cambridge edition was well warranted in stating that it was 'a mistake that has been very often pointed out, first by JA's brother, Edward'.[20] David M. Shapard also mentions it in his commentary on *Emma*, adding that Edward himself was mistaken in saying 'July', as the text of *Emma* states 'almost Midsummer'.[21]

Jo Modert has suggested that the visit to Donwell takes place on 23 June.[22] This seems plausible given that the text states 'almost midsummer' and that the 23rd is Harriet's birthday, with midsummer being the day after, the 24th.[23] It is worth pointing out that 23 June was Austen's brother Charles's birthday, a fact mentioned by Austen in a letter written on that day in 1816, with *Emma* being published late in 1815.[24] Curiously, in the passage where Harriet reveals her birthday, she also tells us that Robert Martin's birthday is on 8 June, which is the same day as another of Austen's brothers, Henry.[25] The use of these two dates

may well be a family in-joke, of which there are a number in the novels.

Another point worth mentioning is that Edward referred to apple trees, whereas Austen did not, as she simply referred to an 'orchard in blossom' and in this detail, we might find an explanation. In the Autumn 2022 *News Letter* of the Jane Austen Society, Caroline Riden makes the point that there are many types of orchard, and in February, when Emma's carriage is stopped by Mr and Mrs Weston with the news of Frank's arrival, the narrator states, 'When she [Emma] looked at the hedges, she thought the elder at least must soon be coming out; and when she turned round to Harriet, she saw something like a look of spring, a tender smile even there'.[26] Riden concludes, 'The one orchard in blossom at strawberry time would have been the elder orchard'.[27] Interestingly, a short article by Vernon Rendall published in 1941 stated that he believed elder to be a false reading and that the text should actually read 'alder'. This was on the grounds that the elder is a summer flower and the alder's catkins flower in early spring.[28] However, two subsequent articles suggest that this reading is not tenable, with William Harcourt-Bath explaining, 'The reference to the elder points evidently to the early leafing of this shrub or small tree not the flowering thereof'.[29] This appears to be supported by the Cambridge edition of *Emma* which glosses this line with the note, 'the elder is the first common tree to come into leaf in Britain. In a mild winter it may do so even before the end of January.'[30]

However, this is not the only explanation that has been put forward. In 1996 John Sutherland published *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* which contained a chapter with the title, 'Apple-blossom in June?' Sutherland argues that there are actually not one, but potentially three separate errors in the passage in question: 'It [Abbey Mill Farm] might be safely viewed with all its appendages of prosperity and beauty, its rich pastures, spreading flocks, orchard in blossom, and light column of smoke ascending.' Aside from the blossom in June, why, asks Sutherland, is there smoke rising from the chimney of Abbey-Mill Farm at near midsummer? And why the reference to 'spreading flocks' which would seem more appropriate to early spring and lambing season?[31] Sutherland's explanation is that the passage is intended to create a montage of the turning seasons, a device used by William Cowper. Sutherland refers to Cowper's *The Task* Book VI, lines 140-160, noting that Austen knew Cowper well.[32] Sutherland does not state this, but Austen directly refers to this very passage in her letter of 8-9 February 1807: 'at my own particular desire he procures us some Syringas. I could not do without a Syringa, for the sake of Cowper's Line.'[33]

Sutherland's argument had actually been anticipated by Stephen Derry in 1993.[34] Derry puts forward a similar argument, but drawing on Jocelyn Harris's work, suggests that Austen's source is Edmund Spenser rather than Cowper, referring to the description of the Garden of Adonis in Book III of *The Faerie Queene:*

There is continuall Spring, and harvest there
Continuall, both meeting at one tyme (III.VI.42)[35]

Derry adds that A.C. Hamilton, in his commentary on this line, notes that the idea of simultaneous seasons draws on a classical and Biblical tradition and also appears in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, a translation of which Austen owned.[36]

> At once the trees with leaves unfading grow
> The fruits are ripen'd and the blossoms blow.[37]

Derry published a subsequent article in 1996 where he noted that the idea of simultaneous seasons also appears in *The History of Nourjahad* (1767) by Frances Sheridan (1724-1766), mother of the playwright.[38] Derry quotes the relevant passage:

> He gave commandment … that the seasons should be anticipated, and the early fragrance of the spring should be united with the more vivid colours of the glowing summer. In short, that fruits, blossoms, and flowers, should at once unite their various beauties, to imbellish this terrestrial paradise.

Derry also notes that there was a stage version of Sheridan's novel which Austen mentions seeing a part of in her letter of 5-8 March 1814, during the very period in which she was writing *Emma*. It is unclear how the simultaneous seasons were depicted on stage, or whether Austen even saw it, as she notes, 'We were too much tired to stay for the whole of Illusion (Nourjahad) which has 3 acts', although it appears that Austen was not impressed with what she did see: 'there is a great deal of finery & dancing in it, but I think little merit.'[39]

Sutherland himself returned to the subject in 1999 with the publication of another book of literary puzzles *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet?* which contained a follow-up chapter 'Apple-blossom in June – Again', which noted a number of objections to his theory.[40] Claire Lamont had pointed out that sheep spread out when they are content and huddle together when afraid, so the reference to 'spreading flocks' does not necessarily denote early spring. Similarly Deirdre Le Faye noted that a fire at midsummer would not be unusual, as fires would be needed all year round for cooking, heating water, etc. And in fact, there is a fire at Donwell itself, on account of Mr Woodhouse.[41] Despite these various objections, Sutherland stood by his interpretation; but there is a potentially different explanation, one which is rooted not in literature but in climate.

This is partly explained in an article referenced by Sutherland, written by Euan Nisbet, now Emeritus Professor of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway, University of London.[42] In an article from 1997, Nisbet mentions the eruption of Mount Tambora, which occurred in April 1815 on the island of Sumbawa in what is now modern day Indonesia.[43] This eruption has been largely forgotten, but its consequences were far reaching and fatal. Gillen D'Arcy Wood, who has reviewed the eruption and its consequences in some detail in *Tambora: The Eruption That Changed the World*, states, 'The sundimming stratospheric aerosols produced by Tambora's eruption in 1815 spawned the most devastating,

sustained period of extreme weather seen on our planet in perhaps thousands of years'.[44] A useful point of reference here is the Volcanic Explosivity Index (VEI), which is used to measure the scale of eruptions and which runs from zero to eight, with zero being the lowest. Some readers may remember the Icelandic eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 which caused widespread and significant disruption across Europe. This was a one on the VEI scale, which bears the surprisingly mild qualitative description of 'gentle, effusive'. Tambora ranks as a seven, whereas the much better known eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 was a six.[45]

The eruption at Tambora on 10 April 1815 could be heard hundreds of miles away.[46] The resulting ash cloud from the eruption would circle the globe with lethal consequences in places as varied as China, India, North America and England. Wood notes that 'Five months after the eruption, in September 1815, meteorological enthusiast Thomas Forster observed strange, spectacular sunsets over Tunbridge Wells near London'.[47] The following year, 1816, has been described as a year without summer, or, as Wood calls it, a year without a sun.[48] Austen had of course completed *Emma* by the end of March 1815, according to Cassandra's note, but Wood points out that Tambora was preceded by a major unidentified eruption of 1809. This too had a significant impact on global climate, an example being the first days of May 1810 which were the coldest in living memory in parts of England.[49] Due to these two eruptions, the 1810s have been described as 'probably the coldest during the past 500 years or longer',[50] a view supported by Veale and Endfield who note that the '1810s are also among the coldest decades recorded over Europe and the northern hemisphere'.[51]

1814 itself was unusually cold.[52] There was a frost fair on the Thames in February[53] and Austen herself complained about the snow numerous times in March when she was in London.[54] Even in early September, she mentions the cold.[55] A valuable contemporary source which Nisbet draws on is the *Climate of London* by Luke Howard (1772-1864), which was first published in 1818 with a revised second edition appearing in 1833. Howard was a chemist by training, but had a keen interest in meteorology. He is responsible for our naming of clouds and the second edition of his *Climate of London* documents his detailed observations on the weather from 1806 to 1830. Nisbet also notes that Howard travelled between Winchester and Alton on 22 July 1813 on which day Fanny Knight wrote in her diary that she dined at the cottage at Chawton and that Austen dined at the Great House the next day.[56] Howard's book has been described as 'the first book in English on urban climatology'[57] and Wood notes that Howard 'offers hard evidence of the altered weather patterns across western Europe produced by Tambora's eruption'.[58]

We know from Cassandra's note that *Emma* was composed between 21 January 1814 and 29 March 1815.[59] Nisbet points out that the weather as described by Austen in *Emma* during the period of the novel's composition corresponds very closely to Howard's observations on the weather for this period.[60] Nisbet notes that the weather was unusual in 1814: 'The annual mean temperature was

one of the coldest in Howard's record, and in May and June the means were colder than 1816, the 'year without a summer.'[61] According to Howard, there were two hot days, the 14 and 15 June. Interestingly, the weather turned after this and Howard notes, regarding June 21-23, the period of the Donwell Party, 'a fire in the grate has been again acceptable'.[62] We know Austen was an acute observer and paid great attention to detail. This leads Nisbet to conclude 'If she says the orchard was in bloom, then it surely was in bloom'. Curiously, he also states that following the cool spring of 1996, apple trees flowered as late as early June.

All of this sounds highly plausible and offers what is perhaps a neat solution to our dilemma. But John Sutherland raises an interesting question. If the orchard blossomed late on account of the weather conditions of 1814, or the Regency period in general, how was it that the strawberries at Donwell Abbey are unaffected as we know from Mrs Elton's commentary, worthy of Miss Bates, that there is a rich crop?[63]

A possible solution has been put forward by Shannon Campbell, a botanist.[64] Recounting that the 1810s were a particularly cold decade, Campbell draws on the work of both Howard and Nisbet. As noted above, Nisbet had stated that he had seen a late blossoming apple tree in 1996 which led Campbell to ask Nisbet which type of apple it was. Unfortunately, the tree in question had been in Nisbet's garden and had subsequently died. However, by drawing on the database of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale in Faversham, Kent, the most comprehensive public collection of fruit trees in England, Campbell was able to identify a candidate. This was the Court Pendu Plat, also known as the 'Wise Apple' on account of it being a late bloomer and therefore avoiding spring frosts. Data from Brogdale indicates that in 1962, during a cold winter, the Court Pendu Plat was in full flower as late as 13 June, as opposed to the previous year when the date was over a month earlier. Campbell goes on to point out that on 14 June 1814, one of the warm days identified by Howard, Austen mentions walking to Chawton House and then along the Gosport Road.[65] Did she see a Court Pendu Plat in bloom? Could this be the explanation?[66] If so, it does raise the question as to why there is no account of her responding to her brother Edward's comment. It's possible that she did, but her reply was not passed down, or perhaps she just thought it best to remain quiet, a tactic adopted by many within similar family contexts.

At this point, the reader will be forgiven for asking, 'Does any of this really matter?' Many readers will have read *Emma* repeatedly and not have noticed this potential error or be overly concerned on its being brought to light. Some authors too appear not to have been unduly troubled by errors in their work. Sutherland mentions that Walter Scott has the sun setting in the east in *The Antiquary* (1816), an error which was pointed out to him but which he did not choose to correct in the revised edition of 1829 and which the present writer, despite having read the novel several times, had never noticed. In the interest of balance, Sutherland also mentions Rider Haggard who took great trouble to correct a minor error about a solar eclipse in *King Solomon's Mines*.[67] Interestingly, a letter has survived

from Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, in response to a list of errors noticed in his work. Fleming's disarming reply, dated 3 July 1963, stated, 'I am afraid you will find that I make mistakes in all my books and I can only plead that Shakespeare was equally remiss and that Jane Austen once had cherry trees flowering in September!'[68]

Among the critics, opinion also seems to be divided. As we have seen above, a number of critics and researchers have taken great pains over the question of blossom in June. But David Lodge notes in his introduction to a selection of critical essays on *Emma* that Pollock's article 'concerning an inconsistency in *Emma* is characteristic of the tendency of "Janeites" to concern themselves with minutiae'.[69] An interesting counter perspective is put forward by Christopher Ricks in his 'Literature and the Matter of Fact'. A key passage deals with another infamous mistake which appears in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) in the scene where Ralph uses Piggy's glasses to start a fire. Ricks quotes an article on the topic published in *Notes and Queries* in July 1965:

> This is impossible. The lenses used to correct myopia are diverging lenses and so will not bring the rays of the sun to a focus. Had Piggy been long-sighted then he would have been wearing converging lenses, which will focus light to a point. The only trouble is that then he could have survived without them, as he could have seen objects in the distance – for instance, the fatal rock.

Many of us will find it hard to read this with a straight face, although Ricks seems to be suggesting that that is the wrong response. Few of us read like this, and perhaps few would wish to do so. But Ricks makes a convincing argument that such details do indeed matter, and that you cannot, as Julian Barnes suggests in *Flaubert's Parrot* 'detonate the error – like blowing up a small bomb with a controlled explosion'.[70]

But what did Austen herself think? From her letters to Anna Lefroy, providing criticism on Anna's fiction, it appears that she certainly did think accuracy mattered, as appears in her letter of 10-18 August 1814, the very period in which she was writing *Emma*:

> I have scratched out Sir Tho: from walking with the other Men to the Stables &c the very day after his breaking his arm—for though I find your Papa did walk out immediately after his arm was set, I think it can be so little usual as to appear unnatural in a book … Lyme will not do. Lyme is towards 40 miles distance from Dawlish & would not be talked of there.—I have put Starcross indeed.—If you prefer Exeter, that must be always safe.[71]

Austen was equally accurate in her own work noting on the 24 January 1813 while composing *Mansfield Park*: 'I learn from Sir J. Carr that there is no Government House at Gibraltar.—I must alter it to the Commissioner's.'[72]

Like Austen, I believe that such details do indeed matter. They matter because they give us a window into Austen's world, such as her influences and reading, the extreme cold of the Regency period, the pioneering work of the

largely forgotten Luke Howard and the eruption of Mount Tambora, to name just a few.[73] Each of these deserve further consideration and have a claim on our attention and they are often deeply, indeed inextricably, intertwined.

To take Mount Tambora as an example, the eruption led to 1816 being the year without a summer or even without sun. At Chawton, Austen commented on the dismal weather, stating in a letter to her niece Caroline dated 13 March that the pond outside Chawton cottage was 'brimfull & our roads are dirty & our walls are damp, & we sit wishing every bad day may be the last'.[74] Things were no better in the summer when Austen wrote in a letter to her nephew James Edward dated 9 July: 'It [the weather] is really too bad, & has been too bad for a long time, much worse than anybody <u>can</u> bear, & I begin to think it will never be fine again.' A little further on she goes on to write: 'Oh! it rains again; it beats against the window.—Mary Jane & I have been wet through once already today … We met M^r^ Woolls—I talked of its' being bad weather for the Hay—& he returned me the comfort of its' being much worse for the Wheat.'[75] The bad weather also had other consequences, easily missed by us today, as we see in a letter dated 8-9 September 1816 where Austen notes, 'We hear now that there is to be <u>no Honey</u> this year. Bad news for us'.[76]

Meanwhile, in Geneva, Wood reports, 'The year 1816 remains the coldest, wettest Geneva summer since records began in 1753. That unforgettable year, 130 days of rain between April and September swelled the waters of Lake Geneva, flooding the city.'[77] Byron and Shelley spent the summer there, along with Mary Shelley, Claire Clairmont and Byron's physician John Polidori. But the constant rain resulted in the group becoming restless and bored, especially Byron, who grew tired of the ghost stories he was reading, and so he threw down a challenge to see which of them could write a better one. Polidori wrote *The Vampyre*, which was subsequently published under Byron's name and is now largely forgotten, but Mary Shelley's contribution was *Frankenstein*.[78]

Tambora reached into other cultural domains too. Wood notes that 'William Turner drew vivid red skyscapes that, in their coloristic abstraction, seem like an advertisement for the future of art'. Meanwhile, from his studio on Greifswald Harbor in Germany, Caspar David Friedrich painted a sky with a chromic density that – one scientific study has found – 'corresponds to the "optical aerosol depth" of the colossal volcanic eruption that year'.[79] Constable's 1816 Weymouth Bay also shows indications of the unusual weather of the period.[80] Constable's art in turn is thought to have been influenced by Luke Howard's work on clouds, as was Turner's.[81]

Wood also notes that the climate change caused by Tambora raised a delusory hope that the Northwest Passage could be found, which triggered a number of futile explorations. This in turn was incorporated by Mary Shelley in the framing device of *Frankenstein* which opens with Captain Walton's letters which suggest he too is engaged in such an exploration.[82]

Austen's readers frequently develop an extremely close relationship to her and any suggestion of an error on her part is often seen as a personal affront. It's

Weymouth Bay. John Constable. 1816 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Port of Greifswald. Caspar David Friedrich 1818-1820.
National Museums of Berlin, National Gallery / Jörg P. Anders.

pleasing to think that in this case we can vindicate Austen's accuracy, but perhaps what matters in all the above is the reminder that a close reading of Austen's words reveal forgotten details, many of which would have been familiar to her early readers. By uncovering this lost past, we can derive a richer, more informed and deeper appreciation of Austen's times and her work.

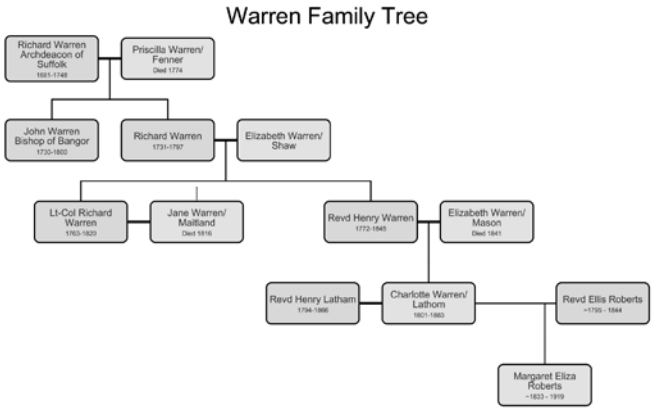
Charlotte Warren – 'Mrs Latham of Torquay'

Walter Herries Pollock added a brief line regarding the recipient of Caroline Austen's letter quoted above which relates the story of Edward's reaction to Austen's orchard in blossom:

> Mr. W. Austen Leigh writes to me that 'the *Charlotte* to whom my aunt [Caroline] wrote must, we think, have been Charlotte Warren—a school friend. She afterwards became Mrs. Roberts, and was the mother of the Margaret Roberts who wrote "Mademoiselle Mori."

'W. Austen Leigh' is presumably William Austen-Leigh (1843-1921), Austen's great-nephew and co-author of the 1913 *Life and Letters*, along with his nephew, Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (1872-1961). No reason is given as to why William Austen-Leigh thought Charlotte Warren was the recipient of Caroline's letter. Charlotte is described by William as a 'school friend' and Caroline states in her *Reminiscences* under 1817: 'On 30th August I went to school at the Miss Burneys, Kingsgate Street, Winchester.'[83] Charlotte was a few years older than Caroline, so if this is correct, perhaps she took Caroline under her wing at school, as Mrs Smith does with Anne in *Persuasion*.

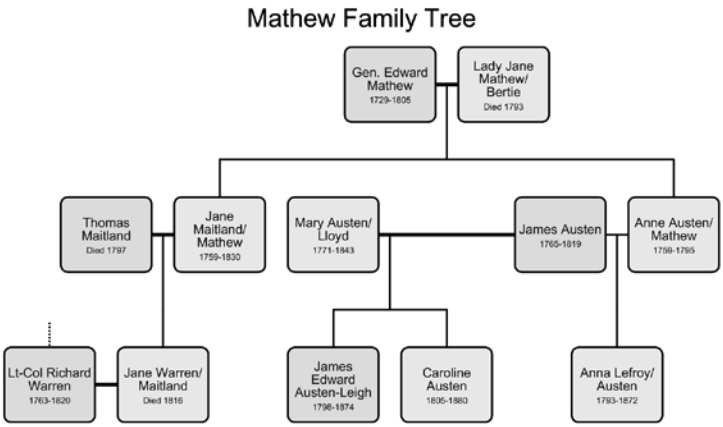
From searching the Ancestry website, a brief history of Charlotte's life can be pieced together, starting with her baptism on 3 November 1801 at Ashington, Sussex. Her mother was Eliza, née Mason (c.1781-1841), and her father was Henry Warren (1772-1845) rector of Ashington and the son of Richard Warren (1731-1797), physician to George III.[84] Henry was also domestic chaplain to John Warren (1730-1800) Bishop of Bangor, who was his uncle.[85]


Warren Family Tree
Richard Warren Archdeacon of Suffolk 1681-1748
Priscilla Warren/ Fenner Died 1774
John Warren Bishop of Bangor 1730-1800
Richard Warren 1731-1797
Elizabeth Warren/ Shaw
Lt-Col Richard Warren 1763-1820
Jane Warren/ Maitland Died 1816
Revd Henry Warren 1772-1845
Elizabeth Warren/ Mason Died 1841
Revd Henry Latham 1794-1866
Charlotte Warren/ Lathom 1801-1883
Revd Ellis Roberts ~1795 - 1844
Margaret Eliza Roberts ~1833 - 1919

Charlotte married the Revd Ellis Roberts[86] on 30 May 1831 at Clifton, Gloucestershire, and they had at least three children, including Margaret, the novelist whom William Austen-Leigh mentions, who was baptised in 1833 in Llanynys where her father was vicar. Roberts died on 12 November 1844 and Charlotte married her second husband, a widower, Revd Henry Latham (1794-1866)[87] on 5 December 1848 at Storrington, West Sussex. We can trace the course of Charlotte's subsequent life through census records. In 1851, she was in Fittleworth, Sussex, where her husband was vicar. Her daughter Margaret was with her, as was her stepdaughter, Diana, who seems to have been born around 1825. In 1871 Charlotte was in Torquay, Devon, by now a widow again, living off 'income from monies'. She was still there ten years later in 1881 as were Margaret and Diana. Charlotte died on 4 May 1883 (leaving behind a personal estate of £578 12s 8d). Another possible connection between Charlotte and the Austens could be her uncle, her father Henry's brother, Lt Col Richard Warren (1763-1820) whom Le Faye identifies as being the husband of the Mrs Warren mentioned in Austen's letter of 20-21 November 1800:

M^rs^ Warren, I was constrained to think a very fine young woman, which I much regret. She has got rid of some part of her child, & danced away with great activity, looking by no means very large.—Her husband is ugly enough; uglier even than his cousin John; but he does not look so very old.—The Miss Maitlands are both prettyish; very like Anne; with brown skins, large dark eyes, & a good deal of nose.—The General has got the Gout, & M^rs^ Maitland the Jaundice.[88]

Prior to her marriage, Mrs Warren had been Jane Maitland, daughter of Jane Maitland née Mathew (1759-1830), who was the twin sister of Anne Mathew (1759-1795), James Austen's first wife and the mother of Caroline Austen's half-sister, Anna Lefroy (1793-1872). The Miss Maitlands referred to by Austen are presumably Mrs Warren's sisters, Caroline and Eliza, who appear to have resembled their aunt Anne.


Mathew Family Tree
Gen. Edward Mathew 1729-1805
Lady Jane Mathew/ Bertie Died 1793
Thomas Maitland Died 1797
Jane Maitland/ Mathew 1759-1830
Mary Austen/ Lloyd 1771-1843
James Austen 1765-1819
Anne Austen/ Mathew 1759-1795
Lt-Col Richard Warren 1763-1820
Jane Warren/ Maitland Died 1816
James Edward Austen-Leigh 1798-1874
Caroline Austen 1805-1880
Anna Lefroy/ Austen 1793-1872

Perhaps this family link also contributed to the connection between Caroline Austen and Charlotte Warren. Caroline's letter is addressed from 'Ferog Firle' (Frog Firle) near Alfriston in Sussex, where Caroline spent the last twenty years of her life.[89] So it would seem that the letter dates from this period of Caroline's life, 1860-1880. It is also worth noting that Caroline made her will on 21 October 1878 and left £10 to 'Mrs Latham of Torquay'.[90]

We know that Walter Herries Pollock's father, Sir William Frederick Pollock (1815- 1888), was a great admirer of Jane Austen, but it isn't clear how he came across the text of Caroline's letter, or the letter's subsequent fate. Curiously, Walter Herries Pollock appears to have lived the later part of his life at Chawton, not far from Jane Austen's House.

Acknowledgments:
My thanks to Jo Strong, Mick Bright, Deb Barnum and David M. Shapard for assisting with various queries.

Notes

1. Sutherland, Kathryn. Ed. *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*. Oxford: OUP (2002), p.18.
2. Beer, A.W. 'Pug's Sex'. Jane Austen Society *Collected Reports 1966-1975*. Alton: JAS, (1999), pp.218-220.
   Sutherland, John. 'Pug: Dog or Bitch?' *Can Jane Eyre Be Happy?* Oxford: OUP, (1997) pp.31-36.
3. We learn that Lady Elliot died when Anne was fourteen. Given that Anne turned fourteen on 9 August 1801, Lady's Elliot's death must have postdated this but her year of death is given as 1800. *Persuasion*. Eds. Janet Todd and Antje Blank. Cambridge: CUP, (2006), pp.3, 5, 335 n.5.
4. Lascelles, Mary. *Jane Austen and Her Art*. Oxford: OUP (1970), p.172.
5. Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Eds. Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan. Cambridge: CUP, (2005), pp.388, 391. Unless stated otherwise, all subsequent references to *Emma* are from the Cambridge edition.
6. Le Faye, Deirdre. *Jane Austen: A Family Record*. Cambridge: CUP (2004), p.230.
7. Austen, Jane. *Later Manuscripts*. Eds. Janet Todd and Linda Bree. Cambridge: CUP, (2008), pp.235-239.
8. (1899) pp.90-91; cited in *Family Record*, p.313 n.4.
9. Pollock, William Frederick. 'British Novelists – Richardson, Miss Austen, Scott.' *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol.LXI, No. CCCLXI (January 1860), p.35.
10. Further details on Charlotte Warren, the recipient of Caroline's letter, appear later in the text.
11. Pollock, Walter Herries. *Jane Austen: Her Contemporaries and Herself*. London: Longmans, Green & Co, (1899), p.91. There was of course no subsequent edition of *Emma* published in England in Austen's lifetime. Was

Caroline referring to the Bentley edition of 1833 or a subsequent edition? If so, who would have made the correction?

12. Hussain, Azar. '"My Chief Favourite among Novelists": Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope.' *Persuasions On-Line* 43:1 (Winter 2022). https://jasna.org/publications-2/persuasions-online/volume-43-no-1/hussain/
13. *Later Manuscripts*, pp.234, 237, 701, 704.
14. Austen-Leigh, William and Richard Arthur. *Jane Austen Her Life and Letters: A Family Record*. London: Smith Elder, (1913), p.307.
15. *Family Record*, p.230.
16. Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Ed. R.W. Chapman. Oxford: OUP, (1988), p.493.
17. Gilson, David. *A Bibliography of Jane Austen*. Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, (1997), p.67.
18. Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Ed. Fiona Stafford. London: Penguin, (2003), pp.338, 471-472. However, Stafford does refer to John Sutherland and Euan Nisbet whose articles will be examined in further detail below.
19. Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Ed. James Kinsley. Oxford: OUP, (2003), p.401.
20. *Emma*, p.589.
21. Austen, Jane. *The Annotated Emma*. Ed. David M. Shapard. New York: Anchor Books, (2012), p.641.
22. Modert, Jo. 'Chronology Within the Novels.' *The Jane Austen Companion*. New York: Macmillan (1986), p.58. This is also in agreement with Ellen Moody's chronology: http://www.jimandellen.org/austen/emma.calendar.html, although Sutherland claims that the visit to Donwell occurs on the 22 June. 'Apple-blossom in June – again', *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet?* Oxford: OUP, (1999), p.28.
23. *Emma*, p.29. The note in the Cambridge edition of *Emma* states that midsummer day is 21 June (p.577 n.2). However, a note in the Cambridge edition of *Sense and Sensibility* states midsummer is the 24 June (p.475 n.7). This might be due to conflating midsummer with the summer solstice, the latter typically occurring around the 21 June.
24. Le Faye, Deirdre. Ed. *Jane Austen's Letters*. Oxford: OUP, (2011), p.329.
25. For the birthdates of Henry and Charles Austen, see *Family Record*, pp.xviii-xix.
26. *Emma*, p.203.
27. Riden, Caroline. 'Jane Austen Always "Rings True"'. *News Letter* (Autumn 2022), p.17.
28. Rendall, Vernon. 'Jane Austen A Botanical Point'. *Notes and Queries* (15 February, 1941) p.117. Shortly afterwards, Rendall published a subsequent article where he developed his argument and drew attention to the issue of the orchard in blossom coinciding with ripe strawberries, see *Notes and Queries* (22 February, 1941), p.138.
29. Harcourt-Bath, William. 'Jane Austen A Botanical Point'. *Notes and Queries* (5 March, 1941), p.177. Directly above this note is another making the same point by 'E.G.W.'

30. *Emma*, p.567 n.7.
31. Sutherland, John. *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* Oxford: OUP, (1996), p.18.
32. *Ibid*., p.246 n.6.
33. *Letters*, pp.124, 398 n.5. The relevant extract from Cowper is below.
    But let the months go round, a few short months,
    And all shall be restored. These naked shoots
    Barren as lances, among which the wind
    Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
    Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
    And more aspiring and with ampler spread
    Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
    Then, each in its peculiar honors clad,
    Shall publish even to the distant eye
    Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
    In streaming gold; syringa iv'ry-pure;
    The scented and the scentless rose; this red
    And of an humbler growth, the other tall,
    And throwing up into the darkest gloom
    Of neighb'ring cypress or more sable yew
    Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
    That the wind severs from the broken wave.
    The lilac various in array, now white,
    Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
    With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
    Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
    Which hue she most approved, she chose them all.
    Cowper, William. *The Poems of William Cowper Volume II: 1782–1785*. Eds. Baird, John D. & Ryskamp, Charles. Oxford: OUP, (1995) pp.240-241.
34. Derry, Stephen. '*Emma*, The Maple, and Spenser's Garden of Adonis'. *Notes and Queries* (December 1993), p.467. Note that Derry refers to Donwell Abbey, as opposed to Abbey Mill Farm.
35. Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Harlow: Pearson Longman, (2007), p.348.
36. Gilson, pp.436-437.
37. Ariosto, Ludovico. *Orlando Furioso*. Trans. John Hoole. London: Otridge & Son, (1799), Vol. IV, p.200.
38. Derry, Stephen. '*Emma*, The Earthly Paradise, and *The History of Nourjahad*'. *Notes and Queries* (December 1996), p.417.
39. *Letters*, p.269.
40. Sutherland, John. *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet?* Oxford: OUP, (1999), pp.28-33.
    Sutherland also notes that he was mistaken in his earlier essay by confusing the Donwell outing with that to Box Hill p.248.
41. *Emma*, p.388.

42. Stafford also mentioned Nisbet in the Penguin Classics edition of *Emma* (2003), although she refers to him as Evan Nesbit, pp.471-472.
43. Nisbet, Euan. 'In Retrospect.' *Nature* (10 July, 1997), p.137.
44. Wood, Gillen D'Arcy. *Tambora: The Eruption That Changed the World*. Princeton: PUP, (2014) p.8. It is worth noting that Wood has also published on Austen. His chapter 'Austen's Accomplishment: Music and the Modern Heroine' appears in *A Companion to Jane Austen* edited by Claudia L. Johnson and Clara Tuite (2009), pp.366-376. This chapter was subsequently revised for Wood's *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840: Virtue and Virtuosity* (2010), pp.151-179.
45. Newhall, Christopher G. and Self, Stephen. 'The Volcanic Explosivity Index (VEI): An Estimate of Explosive Magnitude for Historical Volcanism.' *Journal of Geophysical Research* Vol. 87, (1982), pp.1232, 1236-1237.
46. Wood, p.21.
47. *Ibid*., p.2.
48. *Ibid*., p.58.
49. *Ibid*., p.37.
50. *Ibid*., p.39.
51. Veale, Lucy and Endfield, Georgina H. 'Situating 1816, the "year without summer", in the UK'. *The Geographical Journal* (August 2016), p.2.
52. Nisbet, p.137.
53. Adkins, Roy and Lesley. *Eavesdropping on Jane Austen's England*. London: Little, Brown, (2013), p.350.
54. *Letters* pp.266, 268, 270, 271.
55. *Ibid*., p.284.
56. Le Faye, Deirdre. *A Chronology of Jane Austen and Her Family: 1600 – 2000*. Cambridge: CUP, (2013), p.453.
57. Burton, Jim. Luke Howard (1772-1864). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 1 September 2017. https://www.oxforddnb.com/
58. Wood, p.55.
59. Austen, Jane. *Minor Works*. Ed. R.W. Chapman. Oxford: OUP, (1988), facing p.242.
60. The period of composition is of course separate from the time period of the novel itself for which various dates have been put forward. Jo Modert for example states, 'By correcting two Chapman readings, *Emma* can be shown to follow the 1813-14 calendars', p.57.
61. Nisbet, p.137.
62. Howard, Luke. *The Climate of London*. London: Harvey and Darton, (1833), Vol. II, p.242.
63. Sutherland (1999), p.33. *Emma*, p.389. The Cambridge edition notes that Edward's own gardens at Godmersham were well known for their strawberries as Austen mentions eating them three times in a letter from June 1808 p.588 n.9. It appears they grew at Chawton too. *Letters*, pp.136, 202.

64. Campbell, Shannon E. 'Apples and Apple-blossom Time (Wherein Jane Austen's Reputation for Meticulous Observation is Vindicated.)' *Persuasions* (2007) pp.89-98.
65. *Letters*, p.274.
66. It seems Austen took an interest in apples, stating in a letter from Godmersham dated 23 September 1813, 'Apples are scarce in this Country; £1- 5- a sack', p.237.
67. Sutherland (1996), p.15.
68. https://historical.ha.com/itm/books/ian-fleming-typed-letter-london-3rd-july-1963-signed/a/6164-45421.s?ic4=GalleryView-Thumbnail-071515
69. Lodge, David. Ed. *Jane Austen: Emma A Casebook*. Nashville: Aurora, (1970), p.18.
70. Ricks, Christopher. *Essays in Appreciation*. Oxford: OUP, (1996) p.306, 309. This volume also contains Ricks' essay 'Jane Austen and the Business of Mothering', pp.90-113.
71. *Letters,* p.280.
72. *Ibid*., p.207.
73. For two recent considerations of the potential impact of Tambora on *Persuasion* and *Sanditon* by Amelia Dale see '"Out of Season": The Narrative Ecology of *Persuasion*'. *Romantic Climates: Literature and Science in an Age of Catastrophe*, eds. Anne Collett and Olivia Murphy (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) pp.75-90 and '*Sanditon* Without a Summer'. *Romanticism*. 29.2 (2023) pp.188-198. The introduction of the Cambridge edition of *Persuasion* also briefly refers to Tambora, p.xxxiii.
74. *Letters,* p.324.
75. *Ibid*., p.329–330. Although Austen's tone may sound flippant, Wood documents just how serious the famines triggered by Tambora were, e.g. pp.60-64.
76. *Ibid*., p.336. Also noted by Diana Shervington 'No Honey This Year', Jane Austen Society *Collected Reports 1986 –1995*, p.138.
77. Wood, p.46.
78. Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein: or The Modern Prometheus*. Ed. Nick Groom. Oxford: OUP, (2019) pp.xvii-xviii, 173-177.
79. Wood, pp.2-3.
80. *Ibid*., p.51.
81. Burton. www.oxforddnb.com
82. Wood, pp.147-148.
83. Austen, Caroline. *Reminiscences of Caroline Austen*. Great Britain: The Jane Austen Society, (1986) p.50; *Chronology* p.583.
84. Warren, Thomas. *A History and Genealogy of the Warren Family*. Henley-on-Thames: Gresham Books, (1982) pp.51-53.
85. https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=158577
86. https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.

jsp?PersonID=158462

87. https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=64194. Henry's father was John Latham (1761-1843), physician-extraordinary to the Prince Regent. There is an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for John Latham which also includes a short paragraph on Henry Latham, although Charlotte is not mentioned by name.
88. *Letters*, p.63.
89. *Reminiscences*, p.3; *Letters*, p.490.
90. *Chronology*, p.695.

A 'lost' apartment at Jane Austen's lodgings, 8 College Street, Winchester

Adam Rattray

'I have lost a treasure, such a Sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed,— She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow, I had not a thought concealed from her, & it is as if I had lost a part of myself.'
Cassandra Austen to Fanny Knight, from Winchester, 20 July, 1817.

On 24 May 1817, Jane and Cassandra Austen, their brother Henry and nephew William Knight set off from Chawton to Winchester. It was raining and Jane was ill and tired, her face blotchy. Their destination was a set of lodgings at 8 College Street, found for them by their old friend, Elizabeth Heathcote. Though Jane described the accommodation as 'comfortable', sickness and exhaustion meant her life in Winchester was constrained. As she wrote to a friend at the end of May 1817: ' I live chiefly on the sofa, but am allowed to walk from one room to the other. I have been out once in a sedan-chair, and am to repeat it, and be promoted to a wheel- chair as the weather serves.' Jane was seeking medical treatment from a well-known Winchester surgeon, Giles King Lyford, but the doctor could do little, and Jane died on the 18 July 1817, her head on a pillow on Cassandra's lap. The final minutes were described to Fanny in a letter dated two days later:

During that half hour was her struggle, poor Soul! she said she could not tell us what she sufferd, tho she complaind of little fixed pain. When I asked her if there was any thing she wanted, her answer was she wanted nothing but death & some of her words were "God grant me patience, Pray for me, Oh Pray for me". Her voice was affected but as long as she spoke she was intelligible.

Over the years, the events of the last days of Jane's life have been described and discussed by Austen historians: her strange illness and death; her relationship with her sister-in-law Mary, wife of James Austen; the visits of her brothers; and the tender care of her sister, Cassandra. By contrast, 8 College Street has mostly avoided scrutiny, in part because the house has never been open to the public, but also because we do not know (and probably never will) the exact room in which she died. A partial restoration of the house by the current owners, Winchester College, in advance of opening it to the public this summer, has, in time for the 250th anniversary of Jane's birth, allowed a detailed examination of 8 College Street, with a particular focus on the layout of the lodgings Jane and Cassandra occupied.

In the *Annual Report* of 2023, my colleague at Winchester College, Dr Richard Foster, set out the evidence for 8 College Street being the lodgings that the Austens rented, noting about the building that 'some uncertainties remain'. It is a confusing house, and uncertainties will always remain, but with the help of a team of architectural historians, including Charles Brooking, Jeremy Musson and Dr

Adam Menuge, we have recently been able to date more accurately the architectural development of the house, and to their work we have added our own investigation of the floorboards, ceiling heights, windows and historic paints.

8 College Street

From the outside, 8 College Street appears an odd-looking building of awkward proportions, mismatched windows and a hotchpotch of bricks and render. Everything is disjointed and a little unsatisfactory: the façade is low, and ill proportioned, and the house seems excessively deep for its rather squat front façade. At ground-floor level there is, happily, elegant late Georgian/ Regency applied detail around the front door, with a mid-nineteenth-century window to the left (the house was a confectionery shop between 1843 and 1893) and an early-nineteenth-century window to the right. Upstairs, a bow window juts out awkwardly and the remaining windows are strangely flattened. If it were not for an elegant oval plaque proclaiming, 'IN THIS HOUSE JANE AUSTEN LIVED HER LAST DAYS AND DIED 18 JULY 1817', few passers-by would give No. 8 a second glance. The house is very much a poor relation to the grander houses that are its immediate neighbours: higher status No. 9, to the right, and, to the left, a looming Gothic Revival pile, the former Winchester College Headmaster's house.

Step inside, and it is, if anything, even more confusing. Here seventeenth-century floorboards and beams sit alongside eighteenth-, nineteenth- and

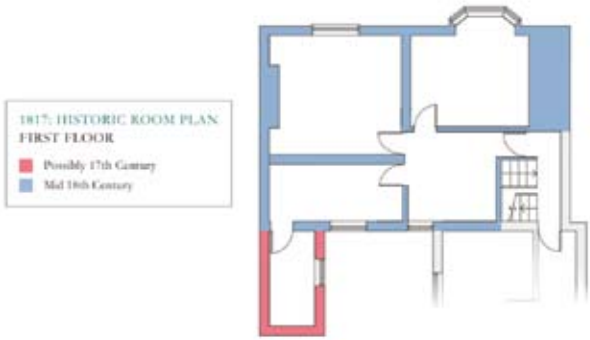
twentieth-century ones. Substantial alterations in the middle of the nineteenth century and in the 1930s complicated an already mixed-up layout, with awkward steps, changed staircase arrangements and doors of different ages and of different status. To understand the house, it is best to think of it as a seventeenth-century timber-framed house that was extensively remodelled in the following century, particularly around 1750, when a long rear extension was built. In the 1840s, a tenement to the east with a bay window was removed when the next-door Headmaster's house was rebuilt.

Internally, there have been a number of changes to the layout since the Austens were resident. In about 1850, a ground-to-first-floor staircase was moved to make room for an enlarged retail space downstairs, which in turn altered the upstairs layout, creating the arrangement described in a survey of 1893 commissioned by Winchester College: 'On the First floor there are two Sitting rooms, (one with the Bay Window), two bed rooms, a small room used as a Store, and a roomy landing.' Then, in the 1930s, an internal wall was taken down between the two 'sitting rooms' to create a large L-shaped drawing room at first-floor level.

Interior view, 2024. The opening between the two front rooms was created in the 1930s, forming an L-shaped drawing room.

Why does any of this matter, and how relevant is all of it to our understanding of the lodgings rented by Cassandra and Jane Austen? Well, until January this year it was thought that the Austens rented two rooms at the front of the house, and possibly the rear rooms at first-floor level. The reason we thought two rooms at the front (rather than four with a hall) was because a survey of 2018 told us that the rear wall of the bow-windowed drawing room and the rear small extension were mid-nineteenth century. Imagine our excitement then, when we scraped back five or six layers of paint and wallpaper and found eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century paints that proved that in 1817 there was a set of four rooms and a hallway at front first-floor level, forming lodgings that could reasonably be described as 'comfortable', and all of a size perfectly adequate for the modest needs of the Austens.

To support our paint findings, we looked at ceiling heights, changes in the floorboards, the position of windows, the position of the original staircase. Charles Brooking, the country's leading expert in dating windows, mouldings and locks, inspected the site and confirmed our discoveries. It is perhaps easier to understand what has been found by looking at the two layout plans below.



Plan A. *A 'comfortable' four-room set of lodgings as it likely existed at first-floor level in 1817, at 8 College Street. Note the existence of three rooms to the left, and the central landing/ hall. The 'neat' drawing room where Jane spent much of her time on a sofa is top right. The small rear extension, outlined in red, which a 2018 survey gave as nineteenth century, is either seventeenth or eighteenth century.*

Plan B. *Layout of rooms, first floor, as we understood them until January 2025: then we thought that the Austens occupied two rooms at the front, and possibly one or both rear rooms of the long rear extension.*

Though we will probably never know if Jane occasionally (or continuously) rented the rear rooms in 1817, on balance, it seems likely she did not, confining herself and her family or guests to the front four rooms shown in Plan A. Note the change of staircase position in about 1850 (from 04 to 06) when alterations were made downstairs to enlarge the shop: probably at this time the rear wall to the front left drawing room was removed (at point C), creating two front rooms (the arrangement noted in the survey carried out for Winchester College in 1893).

Paint analysis, the beam above and a change of floorboards revealed the existence of a rear room in Jane Austen's time, now indicated by the change in paint colour.

Scarring of the door frame at the end of the corridor show that there was once a lockable door here, suggesting there existed in 1817 a separate two-room apartment at the rear to its four-room neighbour at the front. There are also 1750s locks on both the rear-room doors, allowing further flexibility of letting – it would have been possible for Mrs David (the Austens' landlady) to rent the two rear rooms individually or as a two-room apartment.

Happily, the early paint colours we discovered were beautiful: cream in the bow-

fronted drawing room; grey in the second front room; red ochre in the rear room; a slightly more pinkish red in the small rear extension. On the walls of the original staircase landing, we found pink-orange paint, evidence that suggested that, before the staircase was moved circa 1850 to make way for an enlarged shop downstairs, a front door to the apartment probably opened to a short corridor (painted white), with a step down to a hall/landing (also painted white).

The paint historian, Edward Bulmer, generously gave up his time to match the original colour schemes, allowing visitors to better understand the 1817 layout.

Copying the eighteenth / early-nineteenth-century paint schemes allows visitors to understand the layout of the lodgings as they existed in 1817 – a four-room apartment with a central hallway.

Locks on the doors to the first-floor rear extension show that this area of the house was formerly easily separated, and though we will probably never know if the two rooms at the back were also rented by the Austens, the strong likelihood is that they were not. Landlords were generally a tough-minded lot in the early-nineteenth century, renting rooms to maximise profit, and though we know little about Mrs David other than that she variously held or bought the leases of Nos 8, 9 and 10 College Street. It seems probable that she was as commercially-minded as her peers, renting every room possible.

Cassandra did not attend the burial, but she watched Jane's body leave College Street, as she told Fanny: 'I watched the little mournful procession the length of the Street & when it turned from my sight & I had lost her for ever—even then I

was not overpowered, nor so much agitated as I am now in writing of it.' We can only imagine her feelings, but we can still stand in the bow window from which she watched the burial party leave, and now, on the 250th anniversary of Jane's birth, we better understand the 'comfortable' lodgings where she and her beloved sister spent their last months together.

Winchester College is hosting a number of events to mark the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, including outdoor theatre performances and embroidery classes inside No. 8. Find out more: https://www.trybooking.com/uk/eventlist/winchestercollegeheritage.

There will also be an exhibition about Jane Austen and her connections with Winchester inside Winchester College's Treasury museum, May – December 2025, open every day from 2-4pm with free entry.

Mazzinghi's Music Games

Dianne Brick

Some years ago, I owned a rare Tunbridge Ware box, which related to the composer Joseph Mazzinghi (1765-1844) but at the time I did not recognise its full significance, nor the potential contribution of similar boxes to a young lady's musical education at the end of the eighteenth century. Recently the same box was offered for sale at auction by Robert Bleasdale and this has prompted me to think again about this item and how it would have been used when it was made.

Music was a significant part of a young lady's education in Jane Austen's time and like many of her contemporaries, she learnt to play the pianoforte. In her early years, the childishly written inscription at the front of one of her music books, 'Juvenile songs and lessons for young beginners who don't know how to practise', served as a reminder that continual piano practice was necessary. This had no doubt been instilled in Jane when she started to play the pianoforte and reinforced in 1796 when she was studying under George William Chard, the assistant organist at Winchester Cathedral. In her adult life, when she had access to a pianoforte, Jane liked to play for an hour, early every morning, and her letters reveal that she frequently encouraged her niece, Caroline, to practise too. Even towards the end of her life, Jane was concerned about Caroline's musical progress. 'I wish you could practise your fingering oftener,' she wrote on 26 March 1817.

In Austen's novels musical prowess is also highly valued and we are often told about a character's level of achievement. Jane Fairfax and Marianne Dashwood stand out as the two examples who were both talented piano players and were prepared to practise. By contrast, Catherine Morland at eight years old had been 'very fond of tinkling the keys of the old forlorn spinet' but she did not take to serious musical instruction. 'The day which dismissed the music-master was one of the happiest of Catherine's life'.[1] Emma Woodhouse's success as a pianist

was also limited. Although she had every possible encouragement to play well, she was not prepared to spend the time practising and by her own admission her playing could not match up to that of Jane Fairfax: '"My playing is no more like her's, than a lamp is like sunshine."'

In *Emma* Jane Austen includes more about music than in any of her other novels, especially when the arrival of Jane Fairfax's costly instrument focuses attention on piano playing. It is in this novel that Jane makes her only reference to a composer by name, when Frank Churchill asks, '"Do you know Cramer?"' By 1814, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858) was already famous as a leading pianist and a prolific composer. His works included concertos, chamber music and sonatas and today he is remembered for his educational material. Cramer's *84 Studies for Piano* are still regarded as indispensable for those learning the instrument.

Although Joseph Mazzinghi is less well known today than Cramer, he was in Regency times a celebrated musician and composer. Of Corsican descent, Mazzinghi was born in London and was a pupil of J.C. Bach. By the age of ten he was organist at the Portuguese Chapel in London and among his many achievements were becoming the director of the Pantheon, being a member of the Royal Society of Musicians and composing a wealth of music, especially for the piano. Some of Mazzinghi's compositions appear in Jane Austen's music collection, the most notable being a technically challenging sonata, which Jane had copied by hand and therefore presumably was able to play. Mazzinghi was also a teacher, with many influential pupils, including the Princess of Wales, later Queen Caroline. His interest in education is further evidenced by at least two didactic music games that he devised while in partnership with music publisher Goulding, D'Almaine & Co.

Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721-1783) produced the first musical dice game in 1757 and the idea was taken up by Mozart, who experimented with automated composition techniques, producing a similar game. Known as, *Musikalisches Wurfelspiel* or *Dice Music,* this used the throw of a dice to select small sections of music at random, to be combined to create a new musical composition.

Similar dice games became popular in western Europe in the eighteenth century, but an example such as Mazzinghi's, in a whitewood Tunbridge Ware Box, is indeed a rare find today. The box has an applied paper label describing the game as *Lusus Harmonia Mutabilis* (changeable harmony game) *for Two*

German Flutes Opus 54 and it also advertises a similar game for pianoforte, Opus 51.

The interior of the box is divided into compartments containing a selection of circular counters, some depicting musical notes, and some words or numbers.

It would seem likely that a didactic music game such as those created by Mazzinghi could have appealed to Jane Austen, as it would encourage players to turn to the pianoforte to try out their newly created compositions. This in turn might stimulate practice and perhaps turn reluctant pianists such as Emma Woodhouse into more accomplished players. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any concrete evidence that Jane ever played such a music game – unless of course the *'Jeu de violon'* mentioned in the letter of 4 September 1816 was, as Deirdre Le Faye suggested, some form of a parlour game.

The Alton 4 drank tea with us last night, & we were very pleasant:—Jeu de violon &c—all new to M[r] Sweney—& he entered into it very well.—It was a renewal of former agreable evenings . . . & perhaps [we] may have some of the same sports again—[3]

Notes

1. *Northanger Abbey*, vol. I, ch. 1.
2. *Emma*, vol. II, ch. 9.
3. Deirdre Le Faye (ed.). *Jane Austen's Letters*, fourth edition, 2011, p.333.

(With grateful thanks to auctioneer Robert Bleasdale for permission to use his images.)

Notes on Sales 2024

Lizzie Dunford

It is with more than a little trepidation that I attempt to follow in Christine Penney's impressive footsteps to compile this annual record of sales, and must, as so often in life, begin with an apology for anything missed, or incorrectly recorded. I am more used to dusting books than documenting them and must therefore beg patience while I learn and develop this craft.

My task is made a little harder by the fact that 2024 was a relatively sparse year for sales of Austen-related material, with no letters, fragments or manuscripts, and indeed very few first editions coming to auction. One wonders if owners are holding out for the 'big year' of 2025 in an attempt to maximise prices.

First and Early Editions

To illustrate this contrast, in 2023 Sotheby's offered seven first editions for sale on both sides of the Atlantic, and with one exception, all achieved hammer prices of at least $69,000 with half achieving six-figure sums. In 2024 however, just one first edition came to auction, Lot 1098 of the 28 June sale at Sotheby's New York; a copy of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion,* (Gilson A9) in full tan calf, with gilt-ruled boards, marbled endpapers and rebacked preserving the original spines. It was estimated between $12,000 and $18,000 and sold for the lowest estimate, $12,000.

Lot 176 in Cheffins' 4 April Library Sale was a first edition of *Emma* (Gilson A8) bound without half-titles, B1 and B2 of vol. 3 misbound and three leaves with lower corners torn away without loss of text; some variable light spotting and staining, book labels of Mrs Gibson Craig to front pastedowns, near contemporary half calf with armorial device to head of spine, a little cracked and rubbed. This sold for £14,000.

For those who want to purchase a complete set of very early editions in one go, St Mary's Books offer a second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* (Gilson A2), a first edition of *Pride and Prejudice* (Gilson A3), and described by St Mary's Books as one of the finest examples they had seen, a first edition of *Emma* (Gilson A8), a second edition of *Mansfield Park* (Gilson A7), and a first edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (Gilson A9), all identically bound half sprinkled calf with marble sides, full decorative gilt spines with red title bands, and green labels. Each volume gilt inlay to front and rear boards with 'LOND' and the year of publication to the bottom of each volume. At the time of writing, they remain on sale for £145,000 for the set.

An 1813 second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* (Gilson A2) was Lot 737 of the Reeman Dansie sale on 24 September. Still in its original boards, with some restoration, spotting and time stains, it sold for £4,500.

Another early edition, an 1817 third edition of *Pride and Prejudice* (Gilson

A5), published by Egerton, was Lot 95 at the Forum Auctions sale of 18 July, and sold for £3,000.

Lot 448 of the Dominic Winter Auctions sale of 20 June included three texts from the 1833 Richard Bentley Standard Novels series: *Sense and Sensibility, Mansfield Park,* and *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (Gilson D1, D3 and D4 respectively), alongside a copy of Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Eugene Aram: A Tale,* also from Bentley's Standard Novels series. Together, the four texts sold for £2,700.

Collected editions and notable later editions

On 21 November, Forum Auctions sold a five-volume set of the first American collected edition, published in 1853, using the sheets of the 1851 London edition with cancelled titles. In less than perfect condition with a few hinges split or splitting, contemporary dark pink calf, gilt, spines in compartments, spines faded and lacking labels, vol.1 upper cover detached, vols 2-4 piece from head of spine, all vol. corners worn, rubbed and scuffed. As Lot 81, they sold for £1,200.

A complete ten-volume set of the J.M. Dent 1898 collected edition illustrated by Charles and Henry Brock and edited by R. Brimley Johnson, was sold at Gorringes as Lot 2121 on 28 October for £500.

Lot 254 of the 7 February Lyon and Turnbull sale was a collected 'works' missing *Northanger Abbey* by Robert Riviere, c.1934. Made up of four volumes, 8vo, twentieth-century blue half calf by Riviere and Son, top edges gilt, with armorial bookplates of Alan T. Lennox-Boyd. It sold for £2,016, inclusive of the buyer's premium.

Copies of the famous 1894 Hugh Thompson 'Peacock Edition' of *Pride and Prejudice* were sold throughout the year in considerable numbers. Their prices ranged from £580 to £1,050 at Dominic Winter Auctions, a spread of prices matched across the country. An interesting and unusual 'Large Paper' version of the 1894 George Allen *Pride and Prejudice,* beautifully rebound and one of only 250 copies printed for England and just twenty-five for America, sold at Dominic Winter Auctions as Lot 586 of their 20 June sale. The catalogue described it as having 'silk doublures, all edges gilt, blue morocco gilt by Dieter Rader (Dragon Press Bindery, Nantgaredig, Carmarthen) covers and spine with gilt foliate and rose pieces in gilt, upper cover with inset oval Cosway-style miniature depicting Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, contained in blue cloth solander box with black morocco label, large 8vo'. All I can say is that having trawled through many auction lots over the course of 2024, this was the most pleasing book that I came across, and it made £3,600 – more than the 1817 third edition of *Pride and Prejudice* mentioned earlier.

Items of Austen Family Interest

Away from copies of Austen's novels, there were some interesting items relating to members of Austen's immediate and extended family.

At Lay's Auction House on 8 August, Lot 158 was the 1837 marriage

settlement drawn up between George Thomas Knight Esq. (1795-1867), the third child and second son of Edward Austen Knight, and Hilare, Countess Nelson and Duchess of Brontë. Hilare was the widow of Admiral Lord Nelson's brother the Reverend William Nelson (1757-1835), who was created Earl Nelson on his brother's death, also inheriting the Sicilian dukedom of Brontë. She herself was the daughter of Admiral Sir Robert Barlow, and the marriage with George Knight would be her third – her first husband having been a naval cousin, Captain George Barlow. The marriage settlement – a lengthy document on sixteen sheets of vellum, including a full inventory of the property of the two parties, was signed on 6 February 1837 and was most likely witnessed by Sir William Bridges, Robert Barlow, James Pratt Barlow and Frederick Mews. A document with both Nelson and Austen interests, it sold for £100.

A rather handsome 1856 portrait of Norah Hill (1835-1920), the daughter of Cassandra Jane Knight and Lord George Hill, painted by the Irish artist John Joseph Slattery (fl. 1848-1858), was offered for sale at Adam's Auction House in Dublin on 15 October. It was Lot 514, with an estimate of €6,000-8,000. It did not sell. (See Stephen Mahony's article in this *Report*.)

Closer to home than Dublin, on 26 June, Noonans Mayfair auctioned an unissued £5 bank note for Henry Austen's Petersfield New Bank of Austen, Vincent & Clement. The note was in excellent condition, with no serial number, and only slight toning to the edges. Estimated at between £300 and £400, it sold for £1,100 as Lot 36. (Do read Emma Clery's excellent *Jane Austen: the Banker's Sister* for more details on Henry Austen's multilayered financial enterprises.)

Other Items

The runaway auction success of the year for Austen-related material was not a prized first edition, nor was it a precious fragment of a handwritten letter. No, it was a costume from a television adaption, that has become as iconic as the original text itself. On 5 March, Kerry Taylor Auctions' much anticipated 'Lights Camera Auction' saw the sale of carefully selected items from the world-renowned Cosprop costume store as part of a charity auction to raise funds for The Bright Foundation. The highlight was Lot 13 – Fitzwilliam Darcy's 'wet shirt' (and indeed breeches and waistcoat) as worn by Colin Firth for the infamous 'lake scene' from the 1995 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. With an already high estimate of £7,000-£10,000, the hammer came down at £26,000. It was sold to Calderdale Museums Trust, and will be on display at the excellent Bankfield Museum in Halifax until 20 December 2025 as part of their Costume Drama Exhibition. Calderdale Museums also cares for Shibden Hall, the home of Anne Lister, and the exhibition features costumes from the BBC series 'Gentleman Jack' and from the 2020 film adaptation of *Emma*, also purchased at the 'Lights Camera Auction' sale.

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‘“What has he to do with books?”’

Darren Eales

Emma Woodhouse, convinced that the farmer Robert Martin is an unsuitable match for Harriet Smith, speculates pointedly to her friend: ‘“Mr Martin, I suppose, is not a man of information beyond the line of his own business. He does not read?”’ After meeting Martin, Emma dismisses him as ‘illiterate’ and asks, ‘“What has he to do with books?”’[1] While I hope none of you suspect me of being totally illiterate, I would understand if you doubted my knowledge beyond the line of my own business, and echoed Emma’s question: “What has he to do with books?” Specifically, what has the CEO of Newcastle United Football Club to do with the novels of Jane Austen? I represent a male-dominated, global and financial powerhouse of an industry, which is not routinely associated with tasteful restraint or literary genius. Furthermore, I currently work in Newcastle. As far as I know, Austen never travelled within 150 miles of Newcastle, and it appears in her novels only as the place to which Lydia and Wickham must go when they are ‘banished to the North’.[2]

My upbringing really isn’t any more promising. My father was from Derbyshire – not the Derbyshire of Pemberley, the Derbyshire of miners and football – and he raised me to support Chesterfield Football Club. One of Chesterfield’s main rivals is Mansfield Town, and to this day, when someone says ‘Mansfield’, I think first, not of Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, but of a rather rude chant that we sang from the terraces, which involved building a bonfire and putting Mansfield on the top. At school, I avoided the humanities, since essays took too much time away from sport.

Yet, when I was twenty, Austen-mania found me. Lonely and bored, during a university term abroad, I made a list of improving books to read, in true Emma Woodhouse fashion. And, among the weighty Russian tomes, and rugged American classics, I discovered six winning novels that have stayed with me ever since. For years, they have entertained, inspired and instructed me. I laughed at them on beaches, and smuggled them onto team buses. I turned to them when I couldn’t sleep at night, and argued about them with the American graduate student I was

trying to impress. Twenty years of marriage later, that American and I are still arguing about Austen, and she co-wrote this talk.

In 2019, I shamelessly seized the opportunity to strike a public blow in our longstanding matrimonial Austen debate. When *Fast Company* magazine asked me to name a book that had changed my life, I replied: "*Emma* by Jane Austen. The best Austen novel without a shadow of a doubt. My wife insists it is *Pride and Prejudice* but she is wrong."[3] This statement – emphatic and unsubstantiated – represents the extent of my published literary criticism to date. It is a testament to the generosity of Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, this Society's president, that I was still invited here today. Fortunately, Austen's genius is such that it can cover almost any speaker's shortcomings. Like Catherine Morland, all I can claim is that '"I cannot speak well enough to be unintelligible"' – and I will trust Austen to do the rest.[4] For over two hundred years, her novels have withstood sustained literary, historical and psychological analysis from great minds, while also delighting casual readers like me; because Austen – clear-eyed, laughing, compassionate – illuminates the desires and fears, foibles and humanity that we all share, whether we are academics, farmers, musicians, politicians . . . or even football fans.

While there may not be a great deal of obvious overlap between football and Austen's novels, both are frequently criticised for being trivial: "It's just a bunch of overpaid prima donnas kicking a ball." "It's just a bunch of posh people mincing around at a ball." The privilege evoked in both these criticisms reflects, in part, a certain amount of gentrification that has occurred in the last thirty years: for football, owing to colossal injections of broadcasting money; for Austen's novels, owing to screen productions featuring gorgeously-lit stately homes, perpetually sunny gardens, and impossibly attractive actors with cut-glass accents. Historically, however, football and Austen have been both praised and censured for being just a bit 'common' – with varying emphases on the many definitions of that versatile word.

Despite the current crop of millionaire players, football has traditionally been the sport of 'common people' – the working class. Every Premier League stadium now has its fancy corporate boxes with champagne and catering, but I remember, as a very small boy, standing on an actual box to watch Chesterfield play, thermos of Bovril and bag of crisps in hand. There is something inherently egalitarian about football, because you don't need abundant leisure time to watch it, and you don't need an expensive education or special equipment to play it. Over the past fifteen years, I've given contracts to players who grew up on English council estates, in Argentinian slums and even in refugee camps. And an enormous slice of football's global fanbase is still less than affluent.

In contrast, all of Austen's main characters are solidly middle or upper class. Yet her novels do champion people who are 'common' in the sense of being relatively ordinary and accessible. Her heroines are never princesses, prodigies or angels. The whole point of Catherine Morland is that she is completely average, unlike the extravagant heroines of gothic romances. The Dashwood sisters are poor relations – not destitute by any means, but hard up enough to have relatable

concerns about the price of accommodation and food. Fanny Price is not only a poor relation, but is so meek and unremarkable that film producers have deemed it necessary to change her personality beyond recognition before committing *Mansfield Park* to screen. The Bennet sisters face an uncertain financial future, and are sneered at both for their lack of accomplishments and their 'low connections'.[5] Emma may be both handsome and rich, but the reader is left in no doubt that she has extensive shortcomings . . . and her comfortable situation is constantly viewed in uncomfortable counterpoint to the precarious prospects of poor Miss Bates and would-be governess Jane Fairfax. Faded Anne Elliot is the daughter of a baronet, but she is constantly juxtaposed with her showy, snobby family, who push all their unwanted duties on her and treat her as being of less account than the lawyer's daughter, Mrs Clay.

Similarly, the action of Austen's novels centres around what she refers to in *Northanger Abbey* as the 'common feelings of common life'.[6] An 1818 edition of *The British Critic* took issue with this aspect of her work, complaining that the author must be 'deficient' in imagination, since she relates only 'such incidents as have probably happened, at one time or other, to half the families in the United Kingdom'.[7] A viral Amazon review of *Pride and Prejudice* put it more succinctly: 'Just a bunch of people going to each other's houses. One star.'

There are many ways a Jane Austen fan could respond to such criticism. I could decide, like Elinor Dashwood faced with Robert Ferrars, that it does not deserve 'the compliment of rational opposition'.[8] Or I could point out that, for many, Austen's common touch is a hallmark of her genius. One of her first and most famous critics, Sir Walter Scott, praised her 'exquisite touch which renders ordinary common-place things and characters interesting'.[9] In Austen's novels we encounter everyday life that we can recognise, but just done a bit better than in real life. It's common life made interesting by truth and insight; common life enlivened by humour, and infused with romance.

Austen's novels are famously romantic in the popular sense of the word. Yet they also exude another type of romance – the type referred to in English football circles as the 'romance of the FA Cup'. The FA Cup is a knock-out tournament, open to nine different levels of teams. This means that, theoretically, some small, non-league side could end up beating all the Premier League giants to lift the cup in Wembley Stadium. While the competition is almost always won by some huge team, most football fans have their 'romance' of the cup moment. Mine came when my dad was working for Histon FC. A non-league village club with average attendances of about 800 people, Histon got a home draw in the third round of the FA Cup against Leeds United. Leeds is one of the most famous clubs in English football, and has a stadium that holds over 37,000. On a rain-lashed November afternoon in Histon, I watched a bunch of village lads with day jobs surge across a muddy pitch and take down the professionals. When the winning goal was headed in by postman Matthew Langston, the roar of the record 4,000 attendance could be heard for miles. For one moment, our common, ordinary lives were touched with magic, and anything seemed possible.

I have that same feeling when I read *Pride and Prejudice*. I may tease my wife for her preference, but I understand why so many people return to this novel again and again. From its justly famous opening line, to its gloriously happy conclusion, *Pride and Prejudice* is a dream-come-true, against-all-odds underdog run in the FA Cup. Armed only with wit and a pair of very perceptive 'fine eyes' the narrator and Elizabeth take down the pompous Mr Collins, the insufferable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and ultimately the arrogant Mr Darcy, ensuring a team Bennet victory in the form of a double wedding and prosperity for all.[10] When Lady Catherine de Bourgh comes to sneer at Elizabeth's home, insult her mother's family, and declare that she's not in the same league as Darcy, Elizabeth personifies all those moments when we, as readers, have been belittled and made to feel ordinary and insignificant. Yet unlike us – or at least unlike me – Elizabeth responds in real time with the kind of perfect retorts that would only ever occur to me three days after the conversation. It's life as we recognise it, but touched with wit, romance and magic.

Yet this romance is balanced by a pragmatic recognition of some of the realities of life – particularly financial realities. Here is another accusation of 'common' that has been levelled at both football and Austen's novels: that of being just a little bit vulgar. All that talk of money! I work in an industry where players are openly defined by their price tags, so I actually find it quite refreshing to be told explicitly that Darcy is worth £10,000 a year, Emma is heir to £30,000, and that neither Elinor nor Edward were 'quite enough in love to think that three hundred and fifty pounds a-year would supply them with the comforts of life'.[11]

One of the most important aspects of 'common' that fans of football and Austen share, however, has nothing to do with money or status. It is the drive to find 'common' ground, to find one's place in a community. Attending a football match isn't just about watching someone kick a ball. It's about being enveloped and lifted in the emotional wave of 52,000 people cheering a goal. It's about wearing the same kit and singing the same songs. It's about celebrating or commiserating with your mates in a pub after a match and dissecting how 'we' played. It's about finding your people and connecting with them.

And, to a certain extent, that's what Austen's novels explore as well. They are not just about finding a spouse, but about successfully negotiating the myriad relationships in which people find themselves. They are about learning to deal with neglectful fathers and over-indulgent mothers. They are about sibling rivalry and deep fraternal affection; about blended families and in-laws. They are about frenemies and that annoying person we can't avoid because they've married into our social circle. They are about that one awful relative who makes every family gathering stressful, and that one comforter who understands and reacts in just the right way when we're depressed. They are novels alive with conversation and community.

Austen's novels all follow a traditional courtship structure, but unlike their many adaptations and imitations, they never fade out on a close-up of a kiss. As the 'tell-tale compression of the pages' signals a 'hastening . . . to perfect felicity',

Austen always leaves space to situate her central couple within a wider community.[12] Darcy's first proposal to Elizabeth envisions their marriage as a passionate but isolated union: one in which his best friend and her beloved sister remain separated; in which his aristocratic relations shun his bride, and he holds himself aloof from her connections 'whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath [his] own'.[13] What Darcy actually gets at the end of *Pride and Prejudice* is a Pemberley over-run with family and friends: Georgiana as a permanent resident; Kitty as a semi-permanent one; Mr Bennet popping in unannounced, and probably commandeering the library; Bingley and Jane dropping by from their nearby estate, Miss Bingley in tow; Lady Catherine de Bourgh offering unsolicited advice and no doubt voicing her disapproval of Lydia's sporadic visits; and the Gardiners, Elizabeth's lowly relatives from Cheapside, trundling happily around the park with their children behind a pair of ponies. That these last visit with Darcy's full approval is confirmed in the novel's final sentence, which notes that Darcy, like Elizabeth, 'really loved' the Gardiners.

At the end of *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot regrets only that she has 'no relations' to bestow on Captain Wentworth 'which a man of sense could value', and which could recompense him for the 'prompt welcome' given her by his siblings. She does, however, rejoice in adding Lady Russell and Mrs Smith 'to his list' of friends. He, in turn, learns to value Lady Russell 'from his heart' and becomes a 'determined friend' to Mrs Smith, helping her to recover her late husband's property.[14] From start to finish, Austen's novels address, not just the desire for romantic love, but the need for a network of relationships.

This is perhaps most readily apparent in *Emma*. It is the only one of Austen's novels to begin with the heroine's name, and for one brief opening paragraph, the reader is afforded a flattering close-up of Emma, with no one else in the frame:

> Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

Yet as the camera pulls back, the picture becomes less perfect, more disjointed, showing a heroine out of place in her relationships. The early death of Emma's mother, followed by the marriage of her sister, has left her mistress of Hartfield for the last seven years – a perfectly suitable position for a grown woman, but not for a girl of thirteen. Confined to Highbury, where she is 'first in consequence' Emma acquires a falsely inflated and isolating sense of social status that probably would not have survived regular trips to London and Bath.[15] Her father's nervous disposition and limited intellectual powers reverse their natural roles, making the young Emma her father's carer. Unlike Fanny Price, who finds 'felicity' in 'unchecked, equal, fearless intercourse' with her brother, Emma finds a relationship of 'equal footing and perfect unreserve', not with a sibling, friend or lover, but somewhat detrimentally with the substitute mother-figure of Miss Taylor.[16]

Many readers have objected to the pairing of Emma with Mr Knightley in light

of the latter's almost paternal relationship to her. Yet the novel makes clear from the outset that the vacuum left by the lack of actual parental guidance in Emma's life is responsible, at least in part, for this unnatural dynamic. Mr Knightley criticises Emma, not because he is an incurable mansplainer, but because he knows he is the 'only one' who will ever tell her of her faults, the only one with sufficient intellectual and social standing to challenge her.[17] The novel's famous Box Hill scene exemplifies this. In most screen depictions, Emma's insult to Miss Bates is followed by an uncomfortable moment of shocked silence in which Emma appears immediately to realise and regret her rudeness. Mr Knightley's later reprimand therefore seems somewhat unnecessary and officious. Yet in the novel, there is no clear indication that Emma initially realises how hurtful she has been. When Mr Weston hurries into the breach after the insult, he does so with a riddle praising Emma's perfection, and she finds 'a great deal to laugh at and enjoy' in this flattery.[18] Emma does not appear to think about Miss Bates again until Mr Knightley chastises her privately at the end of the outing, at which point she 'recollect[s], blush[es], [is] sorry'.[19] Yet, merited as Mr Knightley's reproof might be, this admonitory position is hardly suitable for a lover, and he rightly renounces it once they are engaged. His assertion that Emma would have turned out just as well without his interference, and that it was 'very natural' for her to resent his lecturing, points towards a more equal relationship, in which he benefits from her companionship, just as she does from his.[20]

Mr Knightley's need for Emma's companionship is not readily apparent at the novel's opening. He is less isolated than she is, able to go to London to visit his brother with whom he shares a 'real attachment'.[21] Yet his position in Highbury as 'general friend and adviser' seems to preclude particular friends and equal companionship at home.[22] Mrs Weston touches on this when she says to Mr Knightley, '"You are so much used to live alone, that you do not know the value of a companion"'.[23] The one chapter in *Emma* that is told almost entirely from Mr Knightley's point of view ends with him returning to the 'solitude of Donwell Abbey'.[24]

Mr Knightley's decision to exchange this solitude for married life at Hartfield with Emma and her father represents not only a delightful twist on gender roles, but also a practical affirmation of the couple's dedication to their community. The imaginative Emma does not envision Mr Knightley swooping her up onto a horse and taking her away from all her tiresome, day-to-day responsibilities: instead, she sees him sharing in the heartbreaking labour of caring for a beloved but increasingly elderly parent: 'Such a companion for herself in the periods of anxiety and cheerlessness before her! – Such a partner in all those duties and cares to which time must be giving increase of melancholy!'[25] *Emma* has the longest denouement of any of Austen's novels – six chapters follow the central couple's declaration of mutual love. While some of this is dedicated to resolving the romances of secondary couples, it also allows the reader to witness Emma growing in multiple relationships. Secure now in Mr Knightley's love and confidence, we see her responding with quiet amusement, rather than frustration,

to Mrs Elton's pretensions; chatting warmly and openly with Jane Fairfax; and rejoicing over Mrs Weston's safe delivery of a baby girl . . . whom Emma may or may not secretly be hoping to match with one of her nephews. The final paragraph of the novel, set to the chattering soundtrack of Mrs Elton's commentary on Emma and Mr Knightley's wedding, is a far cry from the serene close up of the novel's opening:

> Mrs. Elton . . . thought [their wedding] all extremely shabby, and very inferior to her own. – "Very little white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business! – Selina would stare when she heard of it." – But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes . . . of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union.

Emma does, after all, have things both petty and profound to 'distress' and 'vex her', from the carping of Mrs Elton, to the inevitable decline and death of her beloved father. But we see her at last, not only happily united with Mr Knightley, but also supported by a 'small band of true friends'. She has found her place among her people.

It is fitting that Austen should emphasize how even the most gifted people need others, since she strikes me as a true team player. For such a uniquely talented individual, she displays a surprising lack of ego. Given my profession, I find this particularly inspiring. Although I love working in football, it is undeniably an industry that attracts some 'big personalities' (to put it charitably). Perhaps those of you in other professions don't have to deal with egotists – I couldn't possibly say. It does seem, however, that particularly with the rise in social media, there is a pervasive emphasis in our society on self-promotion. Austen, however, appears to have had little interest in promoting her own personal brand. She may joke in one of her letters that she does 'not despair' of having her portrait displayed 'at last—all white & red, with my Head on one Side' in the style of one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's famous subjects; however, of the eight Austen siblings, Jane and her brother George are the only ones for whom there is 'neither formal portrait nor silhouette'.[26] The only contemporary likeness we have of Austen is a very un-Instagram-worthy sketch by her sister, Cassandra.

Austen's letters are similarly unfiltered. Deirdre le Faye points out the contrast between Austen's scattered missives, and the 'overwhelmingly full publications of letters by other authoresses, famous in their day, who had deliberately written not for their families but for effect and for posterity'.[27] Austen's 'sprawling lines' show her to be far more interested in furthering her relationship with the named recipient, than with constructing her persona for posterity.[28] In one of her chatty, gossipy letters to Cassandra she notes, 'I have now attained the true art of letter-writing . . . to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth'.[29] There is a heartening generosity in Austen's interactions with her siblings, whether it is her repeatedly thanking Cassandra for her diverting letters, and crowning her sister 'the finest comic writer of the present age', or

telling Francis that his letter contained so much 'real intelligence' that hers seemed but a 'scratch of a note' compared to it.[30]

It could be argued that Austen's apparent lack of ego is, in part, the product of external forces, such as the relatively modest success of her novels during her lifetime, and the destruction of many of her letters. Yet what we have of Austen's writings suggest a conscious choice to privilege art over the artist. After reading a novel by Samuel Egerton Brydges, she explains her family's reaction to it:

> My father is disappointed—I am not, for I expected nothing better. Never did any book carry more internal evidence of its author. Every sentiment is completely Egerton's. There is very little story . . . [31]

While Austen experts may enjoy combing her novels for 'internal evidence' of their author, the vast majority of readers are able to enjoy and learn from them without knowing anything about Austen's life. The author never overshadows the story itself.

Austen is even sparing in her use of the first-person narrator – that voice distinct from, yet often closely identified with, the author. While the first-person narrator makes short but memorable appearances in *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*, it is almost entirely absent in the later *Emma* and *Persuasion*. The only early draft we have from any of the six major novels even shows Austen deliberately deleting a brief first person passage in the final chapters of *Persuasion*.[32] The narratorial style most associated with Austen's novels is her innovative and brilliant use of free indirect discourse, a style that involves dissolving the narratorial voice within the thoughts and voices of her characters. It is fitting that this ego-less and social narratorial style should have become the hallmark of an author who seems to have been more concerned with the fame of her characters than with the reputation of Jane Austen.

Yet this relative lack of ego always appears counterbalanced in Austen's writings by an enviably healthy sense of self-worth. The flip side of an inflated ego is often an extreme mental fragility – the craving for adulation is so voracious because deep down, we know it's fleeting. I work in an industry where you're (very publicly) only ever as good as your last win. Increasingly, though, there seems to be a general drive in our society for external validation, for one's worth to be measured in clicks and likes. Austen, like all people, seems to have enjoyed praise and disliked criticism. Yet her confidence in her own judgement and in her worth as a writer seems to have been fairly secure. Her letters never suggest that criticism would throw her into a navel-gazing spiral, or that flattery, even from an exalted source, would turn her head.

When that greatest of Regency social influencers, the Prince Regent, indicated that he enjoyed Austen's novels, and would allow her to dedicate a book to him, Austen didn't exactly leap at the chance. Instead, she cautiously wrote to James Stanier Clarke, the Prince's librarian, asking if it would be 'incumbent' upon her to dedicate her next book to her royal admirer. Although she did eventually dedicate

Emma to His Royal Highness, she politely but firmly refused Clarke's further suggestion that she write a historical romance about the House of Coburg, and dedicate it to Prince Leopold:

> I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life, & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter.—No—I must keep to my own style & go on in my own Way.[33]

Unlike the pompous Clarke, Austen is self-aware enough to laugh at herself, but also secure and confident enough to persist in her 'own Way'.

Of all Austen's heroines, Elizabeth Bennet most obviously exhibits this peculiar mix of laughing self-awareness and secure self-worth. After overhearing Darcy refer to her as 'tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt' him to dance, Elizabeth does not flee the house in tears, hoping that no one will ever hear of the insult. Instead, she immediately tells the story 'with great spirit among her friends'.[34] Although her own mother describes her as '"not half so handsome as Jane"', Elizabeth does not collapse into a bitter ball of sibling envy.[35] She continues to adore, confide in, value and look out for her older sibling. When Lady Catherine de Bourgh insults Elizabeth's family and attempts to browbeat her into promising never to marry Darcy, Elizabeth neither crumbles nor stoops to insults. Instead, she asserts her own worth and right to happiness firmly and concisely.

While Elizabeth portrays the most laughing and sparkling confidence of any Austen heroine, it is worth noting that all Austen's female leads portray a strong sense of self-worth. Practical, self-contained Elinor Dashwood may honour the man she loves for refusing to break his engagement to another woman, but Elinor never doubts that Edward loves her, not Lucy. Fanny Price is the most 'creepmouse' of all Austen's heroines, and modern readers may itch for her, just once, to give the buzzing Mrs Norris a Marianne-Dashwood-style smackdown, rather than meekly submitting to more abuse.[36] Yet Fanny refuses to contradict her own judgement or compromise her heart by marrying Henry Crawford. It was rumoured that Austen's own sister, Cassandra, 'tried to persuade her to alter the end of *Mansfield Park* and let Mr Crawford marry Fanny Price'.[37] Both Austen and her heroine, however, refuse to reduce Fanny to the role of Crawford's 'reward' for a bit of good behaviour.[38] Austen pays Fanny the compliment of allowing her to know her own mind, and marry the man of her own choosing.

The confidence and agency Austen accords her heroines, as well as the prominence she gives their thoughts and actions, provide a compelling corrective to the male-dominated world in which she lived. In *Northanger Abbey,* Catherine succinctly skewers centuries of male leadership when she says that reading history wearies her because she finds '"the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all"'.[39] Two hundred years on, Austen's privileging of women's voices is still inspiring and challenging. For all its equality in many areas, football, until very recently, has had 'hardly any women at all'. We are playing catch up now in

terms of promoting women's football and opening the door to female executives and officials. And the football industry isn't a total outlier in the entertainment world. In the 1980s, a comic strip jokingly introduced three 'feminist' criteria for movies that have become known as the Bechdel test. To pass the test, the movie must have 1) at least two female characters; 2) who talk to each other; 3) about something other than a man. It's astonishing how many films still fail this test.

Austen's novels, however, gloriously invert this muting of women's voices. Although she creates fully-realised worlds, peopled with three-dimensional characters of both genders, it is women's voices and perspectives that dominate. Utilising the free indirect style, she dips in and out of the minds of multiple characters; however, she spends little time in male minds. Mr Knightley is unique in having his perspective dominate for an entire chapter, in which he begins to unravel the mystery of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax's engagement. Yet Austen overwhelmingly leaves this sort of keen-eyed observation either to the narrator or to heroines such as Elinor Dashwood, Fanny Price and Anne Elliot.

Similarly, while Austen's male characters have quite a bit to say, it is almost always in conversation with women. Andrew Davies' popular 1995 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* opens with Darcy and Bingley chatting as they charge about the countryside on horseback, and later shows Darcy privately giving Bingley his blessing to marry Jane. Yet in the novel, the former scene never occurs, and the latter is only suggested in Elizabeth's cheeky teasing of her new fiancé.

I can think of only one all-male scene in Austen's novels, a rare comic moment in *Mansfield Park*. Sir Thomas Bertram, just returned from the West Indies, and unaware that his children have been indulging in private theatricals, enters the billiard room, only to find himself standing on a stage opposite a startled Mr Yates, who has been 'hallooing' out his lines from the play. Tom Bertram arrives in time to witness the meeting, and stands transfixed with horrified glee:

> His father's looks of solemnity and amazement on this his first appearance on any stage, and the gradual metamorphosis of the impassioned Baron Wildenhaim into the well-bred and easy Mr Yates . . . was such an exhibition, such a piece of true acting as he would not have lost upon any account. It would be the last – in all probability the last scene on that stage; but he was sure there could not be a finer.[40]

The scene continues with Sir Thomas angry and judgemental, Mr Yates affable and clueless, and Tom – who is starting to realise just how misguided his theatrical escapades have been – scrambling like a naughty schoolboy. The laughing Austen deftly pops the bubble of male pretensions, showing a motley collection that, left to their own devices, probably couldn't run a Sunday pub team, much less the world.

Like Tom Bertram staring up at the stage, I read Austen knowing that I will probably see some uncomfortable truths, but be unable to look away because the scene could not possibly be finer. In my opinion, the finest scene in all of *Sense and Sensibility* comes in the second chapter, when Fanny Dashwood expertly

chips away at her husband's resolution of giving £1,000 each to his sisters. In 'thirteen speeches' she turns her husband around 'without his once being aware of what is happening', until he ends by deciding that helping his sisters move is all that's really required of him.[41] Yet while I'm admiring Fanny Dashwood's expert moving of the goal posts, I am also uncomfortably reminded of how often my own good intentions are easily and imperceptibly worn to nothing. Similarly, I can laugh with shocked recognition at my own pet prejudices when Elizabeth Bennet, after warming to the Bingley sisters while they care for Jane, is restored by their subsequent neglect 'to the enjoyment of all her original dislike'.[42]Austen's novels display, in entertaining but unmistakable fashion, our common failings as humans.

Yet this incisiveness is balanced by compassion and hope. After Lydia runs away with Wickham, the Bennets' neighbours might feel it would be to 'the advantage of conversation' for her to be ruined and fall into prostitution, but Austen shows no relish for such extreme punishments.[43] None of the main characters in her novels die or suffer hideous fates. And her heroines, while common and imperfect, all find love and happiness. Lydia might count herself lucky to escape *Pride and Prejudice* with her respectability intact, but the novel's enduring appeal owes much to the dream ending that Austen provides for Elizabeth and Jane. The conclusions of Austen's other novels are arguably more muted than that of her most 'light & bright & sparkling' work; yet Austen handles all her protagonists generously.[44] Near the beginning of *Persuasion*, the narrator famously notes of Anne Elliot, 'She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older – the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning'.[45] Fittingly, Anne is granted one of the most explicitly romantic endings in all of Austen's novels. While Austen only provides a general description of most proposals, Captain Wentworth's declaration of love to Anne is set down word for word:

> You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope . . . I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago . . . I have loved none but you . . .

Truly, a letter 'not to be soon recovered from'.[46] In contrast, the ending of *Mansfield Park* is terribly coy about how and when Edmund finally comes to propose to Fanny. Yet even before this event takes place, the final chapter begins ushering the neglected and overlooked Fanny towards happiness. While many readers, including Austen's own mother, have found Fanny 'insipid' and unlikeable, the narrator, in a rare first-person outburst, surrounds her with joyful affection: 'My Fanny . . . I have the satisfaction of knowing, must have been happy . . . She was returned to Mansfield Park, she was useful, she was beloved.'[47] Austen's novels offer hope, not merely for the exceptional few, but for common, flawed people.

This dynamic of keen-eyed exposure and generous compassion is arguably most apparent in *Emma*. That is one of the many reasons why I think it is the greatest of her novels. Of all Austen's heroines, Emma is the most obviously

flawed, the one where readers most frequently see and laugh at the disjunction between her own self-centred view and reality. And that is why I relate to her. I would love to be a witty Elizabeth Bennet or a perceptive, capable Anne Elliot. But I am most like Emma: a little too fond of my own way; clever, but not nearly as clever as I think I am; full of grand resolutions that are never completed; apt to shirk duties that I find 'tiresome'; quickly weary of hearing others praised; and resentful of those for whom I am 'always doing more than [I wish], and less than [I] ought'.[48]

For me, the most memorable moment in Austen's novels is the one at Box Hill, when Emma insults Miss Bates. It's astounding that such a slight, innocuous scene, written over two hundred years ago, still has the power to make my spine curl with dread every time I get close to reading it. But if you're anything like me, you've been there. That moment when we think we're clever, but realise later that we were just cruel; when we try to impress, but end up revealing the worst of ourselves. Emma reflects back to us our common human failings. And yet, there is hope. All of Emma's faults, all her self-centredness and snobbery, do not cancel out the good in her: her patient, self-sacrificing care for her father; her infectious optimism; her generosity; her genuine desire for those around her to be happy; her intelligence; her glimmers of self-awareness; her deep-seated desire to do what is right; and her spirited confidence. It is entirely believable that Mr Knightley could be one of the few people to see faults in her, and still love her 'peculiarly, exclusively, passionately'.[49] Their love story speaks to a yearning in all of us imperfect readers for friends and lovers who will call us out, not in order to belittle us, but because they truly believe that we are better than we have shown ourselves to be; who see all the growing pains and failures that we try to hide behind a public persona, and love us anyway; who find us 'faultless in spite of all [our] faults'.[50]

It is a testimony to the genius and humanity of Austen's novels that almost everyone in this room will probably have a different character or scene that made them a Jane Austen fan. Even those who, like me, favour Emma, are likely to appreciate different aspects of her. Within the last thirty years, Emma has been portrayed multiple times on screen, each with a different emphasis that draws on varying aspects of the novel. There is Emma as elegant and pouting; self-assured and imaginative; youthfully over-enthusiastic; and spikily intelligent.[51] There is even Emma as bored Delhi socialite, given to matchmaking and makeovers and – my personal favourite – Emma as precocious and privileged Beverly Hills high school student.[52] Her characters are eminently adaptable, because they're so very human. As far as I know, no one has yet filmed an Austen adaptation set in the world of football. Don't worry, I'm not going to conclude by revealing a screenplay for *Pride and Prejudice and the Pitch*. Before I end, however, I would like to beg a few minutes' indulgence for something I've wanted to do for a long time. In football circles, people often create their 'Dream XI' – their ideal football starting eleven, with the best players in each position. So, as a fan of both football and Jane Austen, I offer my 'Austen XI'.

In goal, you need a safe pair of hands. Someone who can handle anything that

comes at her calmly and efficiently. Someone who instills belief in the defence by never showing the opposition that she's rattled. This player is all that, and what's more, is that invaluable thing – a good voice in the dressing room. Endlessly patient with the younger, more emotionally volatile players, but always setting a mature example. My goalkeeper: Elinor Dashwood.

Every team has its big money signing, and mine, rather unusually, is at centre back. There was a bit of a media circus surrounding his transfer, and he had his critics early on; however, he's proved himself excellent at cleaning up other people's messes, and getting his team out of a tight spot. A tall, commanding figure, he's also brilliant at set pieces, towering over everyone to head corner kicks into the back of the net. Post-match commentators still hate him because he refuses to do interviews, but the camera loves him. Since Andrew Davies has taken over as producer at Sky Sports, every broadcast has at least one close up of this player, breathing heavily, his sweaty shirt clinging to his torso: Mr Darcy.

My other centre back is an expert at grinding down the opposition's attack. Many an opposing striker has started out with the laudable intention of helping his team with a hat-trick. By half-time, the striker has usually decided that one goal might be more realistic; and after eighty-five minutes will settle for not making a complete fool of himself. This player is unmatched at turning the opposition around, blocking every attack, and ending up with the opposition striker firmly in her pocket. The ruthlessly effective Fanny Dashwood.

My left back is an expert in defensive positioning. Rather than constantly running towards the action, he's confident enough in his position to hang back and let other players take centre stage. At times, you can almost forget he's even in the game; yet when he's needed, he'll pop back up to give a hand and shepherd the opposition out of the way. Never one for visiting fashionable clubs or other glamorous footballer haunts, his preference for quiet nights in with his many children have earned him the nickname of 'Padre' from his team-mates. The quietly reliable Mr Morland.

Every defensive line needs its bad boy enforcer, and mine has always been at right back. For years, this player has rioted around, getting the job done with little regard for niceties or the damage he might do to the opposition. Following an extensive ban for disorderly conduct, however, he has returned with a new, deceptively smooth style of play. For now, he's still quite effective, but only time will tell whether he will be an heir to greatness, or prove to have feet of clay. My right back: Mr Elliot.

My left winger is possibly the most skillful player on the team, moving smoothly up and down the side of the field in a swift *glissando*. She's also unmatched at pitch-perfect crosses, and one-touch passes, moving the ball on to someone else before the opposition can get anywhere near her. She's somewhat overshadowed by this team's strikers, but on any other team she'd be a superstar. Although she's naturally a private person, recently her picture has been splashed all over the front pages of the tabloids, after it was discovered that she's secretly been dating the lead singer of a boyband: Jane Fairfax.

As the name suggests, it's all about possession for a holding midfielder, and this player is known for giving absolutely nothing away. If we have the lead and want to shut up shop, this player is invaluable – time wasting, swarming busily about the pitch, and committing tactical fouls in order to stop anyone from taking advantage of a quick counter attack. Opposition support always boo her, and even Roy Keane has commented on how cynical her challenges are. Yet every time a player tries and fails to get the ball off her, you can hear our fans singing (to the tune of 'She'll be coming round the mountain') her signature song: 'She won't even give a prayerbook to her god-child': Mrs Norris.

My number eight midfielder is a somewhat controversial signing from the academy. Pundits have criticised this youngster for lacking the finesse of her team-mates; however, no one can doubt her raw talent and potential. In this position, a team needs someone with initiative and daring, and as Alan Shearer once said on *Match of the Day*, "When it comes to thinking outside the box, this is a player who can not only break out of the box with a child tucked underneath each arm, but then raise an army, and come back to destroy the box". My most audacious of creative midfielders: Eliza Harcourt from *Henry and Eliza*.

My captain, and right winger, is a favourite with fans and fellow players alike. All her team-mates know they can go to her with their problems. For several years, she seemed like she might be heading for early retirement, but now at twenty-seven she's enjoying a career renaissance, due mainly to her unequalled ability to read her team-mates and the opposition. Her quiet, self-contained style of play has caused many to underestimate her over the years, but she's shown that there is 'no one . . . so capable' on the right wing as my captain: Anne Elliot.[53]

For forwards, it's all about confidence. Even the most prolific strikers will miss far more shots than they score, so it's important that they don't let a few misjudged attempts get them down. Both my forwards have confidence to spare. My number ten is always ready with a speculative effort on goal; however, she also thoroughly enjoys acting as a link between the midfield and the target forward, bringing her team-mates together through her clever tactical manouevres. In addition, she's excellent at calming some of the more anxious players and making sure everyone is in their correct position. My number ten: Emma Woodhouse.

My target striker is almost too good to be true. No matter how exalted the opposition, she's never intimidated. She's tirelessy fit, not afraid to get a bit muddy, and incredibly quick on the ball. She also has a fine eye for a goal, and is famous for being a spectacular finisher. The brilliant Elizabeth Bennet.

And, finally, every team needs a manager. Mine is a unique tactical genius: innovative and perceptive, she's capable of guiding all the twists and turns of the game to a successful conclusion. She's also an unequalled woman- and man-manager. Former players have said that it's like the gaffer could read their minds. She doesn't suffer fools gladly, and she's merciless in exposing players' weaknesses. Yet she also brings out the best in people, and is always ready with a sincere 'Well done You' for any achievement.[54] The gaffer: Jane Austen.

Jane Austen XI Team Sheet

1. Elinor Dashwood
2. William Elliot
3. Mr Richard Morland
4. Fitzwilliam Darcy
5. Fanny Dashwood
6. Mrs Norris
7. Anne Elliot
8. Eliza Harcourt
9. Elizabeth Bennet
10. Emma Woodhouse
11. Jane Fairfax

Manager: Jane Austen

With thanks to my wife and co-writer, Faith Eales.

Notes

1. *Emma*. Penguin, 2015, pp.28, 33.
2. *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin, 2014, p.297.
3. Melissa Locker, 'The Atlanta United President Darren Eales loves crafting cryptic tweets to the team's fans', *Fast Company*, 2019, https://www.fastcompany.com/90305097/atlanta-united-president-darren-eales-loves-crafting-cryptic-tweets-to-the-teams-fans.
4. *Northanger Abbey*. Penguin, 2003, p.126.
5. *Pride and Prejudice*, p.36.
6. *Northanger Abbey*, p.20.

7. Lucy Worsley, *Jane Austen at Home*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2018, p.321.
8. *Sense and Sensibility*. Oxford University Press, 2019, p.185.
9. Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life*. Penguin, 2012, p.256.
10. *Pride and Prejudice*, p.27.
11. *Sense and Sensibility*, p.271.
12. *Northanger Abbey*, p.233.
13. *Pride and Prejudice*, p.188.
14. *Persuasion*. Penguin, 2015, p.235.
15. *Emma*, p.9.
16. *Mansfield Park*. Wordsworth, 2007, p.186; *Emma*, p.8.
17. *Emma*, p.12.
18. *Ibid*., p. 348.
19. *Ibid*., p.351.
20. *Ibid*., p.432.
21. *Ibid*., p.95.
22. *Ibid*., p.58.
23. *Ibid*., p.35.
24. *Ibid*., p.329.
25. *Ibid*., p.420.
26. Deirdre Le Faye (ed.). *Jane Austen's Letters,* Fourth Edn OUP, 2014, p.260; Tomalin, p. 111.
27. *Ibid*., p.x.
28. *Ibid*., p.79.
29. *Ibid*., p.71.
30. *Ibid*., pp.5, 238.
31. *Ibid*., p.23.
32. London, British Library, MS Egerton 3808, p.21.
33. *Letters*, p.326.
34. *Pride and Prejudice*, pp.13-14.
35. *Ibid*., p.6.
36. *Mansfield Park*, p.118.
37. Tomalin, p.331.
38. *Mansfield Park*, p.376.
39. *Northanger Abbey*, p.104.
40. *Mansfield Park*, p.143.
41. Tomalin, p.161.
42. *Pride and Prejudice*, p.35.
43. *Ibid*., p.293.
44. *Letters*, p.212.
45. *Persuasion*, p.29.
46. *Ibid*., pp.222-23.
47. Tomalin, p.228; *Mansfield Park*, p.370.
48. *Emma*, pp.145, 156.
49. *Ibid*., p. 389.

50. *Ibid*., p.405.
51. Gwyneth Paltrow in *Emma,* dir. by Douglas McGrath (USA/UK, 1996); Kate Beckinsale in *Emma*, dir. by Diarmuid Lawrence (UK, 1996); Romola Garai in *Emma*, dir. by Jim O'Hanlon (UK, 2009); Anya Taylor-Joy in *Emma*, dir. by Autumn de Wilde (USA, 2020).
52. Sonam Kapoor in *Aisha*, dir. by Rajshree Ojha (India, 2010); Alicia Silverstone in *Clueless*, dir. by Amy Heckerling (USA, 1995).
53. *Persuasion*, p.106.
54. *Letters*, p.212.

Contributors

John Avery Jones CBE is a retired Judge of the Upper Tribunal (Tax and Chancery Chamber) and a retired visiting professor at the London School of Economics. His articles on the legal and tax aspects of Jane Austen and her family have appeared in the JAS *Annual Report* and in JASNA's *Persuasions Online*.

Deborah Barnum is a former law librarian, now owner of Bygone Books, an online shop of fine and collectible books and ephemera. She co-founded the JASNA Vermont Region, serves on the boards of JASNA-SC and the North American Friends of Chawton House, and compiles the annual 'Year in Burney Studies' for the *Burney Journal*. She authors the blogs *Jane Austen in Vermont*, *Jane Austen in South Carolina*, and *Reading with Austen: Returning the Lost Sheep of Godmersham*. She lives in South Carolina where she teaches classes on Jane Austen and other women writers.

Dianne Brick has recently retired after running her own antiques business for nearly forty years. As a specialist in Tunbridge Ware, she became particularly interested in items that could be related to the life and times of Jane Austen. Since retirement she has now widened her search for antiques that might enhance the understanding of Austen's world.

Martin Caddick is the House Historian at Chawton House, as well as being a volunteer guide both there and at Jane Austen's House. As part of this role Martin has undertaken extensive research into the history of Chawton House and the Knight family and has written the detailed interpretation material provided to in-house guides. His podcasts and talks are available on the Chawton House website and YouTube channel.

Nicola Cornick studied history at London University and Ruskin College Oxford and worked as Deputy Registrar at Cranfield University before becoming a full-time author of award-winning historical fiction. She is a guide and researcher at the National Trust's Ashdown House in Oxfordshire and is the Craven family archivist.

Rita J. Dashwood is currently a Senior Postdoctoral Fellow at Ghent University in Belgium. Her work has been published in the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, in *Nineteenth-Century Studies* and in several edited collections of essays. She won the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies President's Prize for her research on Austen. Her first book, *Women and Property Ownership in Jane Austen*, was published by Peter Lang in 2022.

Lizzie Dunford is Director of Jane Austen's House, a position she has held since 2020. An experienced manager of museum and heritage sites, she is a trained

conservator who has worked for the National Trust and independent museums, in a variety of roles, both behind the scenes and front of house.

Ronald Dunning is a four-times great-grandson of Jane Austen's brother Francis, and a genealogist.

Darren Eales has been CEO of Newcastle United Football Club since 2022. He previously worked for West Bromwich Albion FC and Tottenham Hotspur FC, and was the founding President of Major League Soccer Club Atlanta United.

Jane Hurst is a local historian, researcher, writer and guide based in Alton, Hampshire. She is a regular contributor to Jane Austen Society publications and her books include *Jane Austen and Chawton*; *Jane Austen and Alton*; *William Curtis, Altonian and Botanist,* and *Jane Austen, Family Connections with Alton and Chawton*.

Azar Hussain is an independent researcher based in the UK. His research is focused on the eighteenth century and specifically on Jane Austen. A number of his articles have appeared in the Society's *Annual Report*, *Notes & Queries*, *Persuasions* and *Persuasions On-Line*.

Chris Jones a life-long Janeite, has managed archive projects at The National Archive, The Royal Opera House, the Rambert Dance Company, Film London and the children's charity Coram.

Stephen Mahony was born in Ireland. After reading Modern History at Oxford, he worked in the City. With a young family he moved to the West Country, where he was a director of a private bank. Now retired, he is the author of *Wealth and Poverty: Jane Austen's Novels Explored* and Treasurer of the Jane Austen Society SW Branch. He has given talks at the Society's Annual Conference and London Study Day.

Adam Rattray is Head of Art History at Winchester College and part of the team preparing 8 College Street for its summer opening.

Report of the Trustees and

Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

for

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was formed on 21st September 2022 with the objective of taking over the net assets and activities of the unincorporated charity The Jane Austen Society (registered charity 1040613).

The principal objective of the Society is as follows:

To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family, in particular by publications or any other means that the charity trustees may deem appropriate.

The objective is primarily achieved by the production of publications relating to the life and works of Jane Austen, through education and by contributions to academic debate regarding Jane Austen, her works and family.

The Society, where appropriate, may seek to preserve artefacts relating to Jane Austen, either by purchase or by contributions towards expenses. In particular it may contribute to projects at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton.

The Society's objectives for the year were to build on the progress made in previous years and to raise the profile of the Society by the production of new articles and publications.

Public Benefit

When planning activities and considering the making of grants, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of education and the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science.

The trustees believe that the Society fulfils these objectives through its educational activities, by its contribution to historical research regarding Jane Austen and the preservation of artefacts relating to Jane Austen and the Austen family.

Significant activities

On 1st January 2023, the net assets and activities of the unincorporated charity The Jane Austen Society (registered charity 1040613) were transferred to the CIO.

The Society did not produce or reprint any publications in the period.

The 2024 annual conference was held in Sheffield in September 2024.

In anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth in 2025, the trustees launched a fundraising initiative in 2018 to support the educational role of the Society. This is known as the "Jane Austen 250 Fund" and although an unrestricted fund, a purpose which the trustees specifically wish to support is the educational activity of the Jane Austen's House Museum. No payments were made from the fund in 2024.

No applications were received for grants from the Education Fund during the period.

During the year the general fund included new expenditure for the build and maintenance of a new online membership platform and also monthly subscriptions to an accounts package. Both initiatives were to future proof and enhance the administration of the Society.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial results for the period are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 5 of these financial statements.

There was a deficit of income over expenditure on the general fund of £30,970 in the period. This, however, was entirely due to a reduction on the value of the portrait of Edward Austen Knight of £32,000 as explained in note 9 to the financial statement. Excluding this revaluation, there was a deficit on the charitable activities of the general fund of £4,600. This deficit was covered, however, by an increase in the value of the Society's investments of £5,630.

Further information regarding the charity's reserves is given in the accounting policies note on pages 7 and 8 of the financial statements.

FUTURE PLANS

The trustees' aims in the future are to continue to promote the objects of the Society, by the production of publications, the organisation of conferences and any other activities which they consider appropriate.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its constitution adopted on 21st September 2022.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The members or the trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new trustee either in place of an outgoing trustee or as an additional trustee, provided that the total number of trustees does not exceed 15.

New Trustees will receive a copy of the constitution and any amendments made to it and a copy of the Society's latest annual report and statement of accounts. New trustees are also referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on the duties and responsibilities of trustees.

Organisational structure

The number of Trustees shall be at least 3 and shall not exceed 15.

The first trustees of the charity were as set out in the constitution adopted on 21st September 2022.

At every Annual General Meeting of the Society, one third of the elected charity trustees shall retire from office. If the number of elected charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one third shall retire from office. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election or re-election. Any person who retires as a charity trustee by rotation or by giving notice to the Society is eligible for re-election. A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be re-elected fo a fourth consecutive term but may be re-elected after an interval of at least one year.

The following trustees retired at the 2024 Annual General Meeting and did not seek re-election: Matthew Huntley, Clare Graham and Richard Jenkyns.

Andrea Clarke having been appointed since the last Annual General Meeting retired at the 2024 Annual General Meeting and was re-elected.Michael Kenning and Fiona Ainsworth also retired at the 2024 Annual General Meeting in accordance with the constitution and were re-elected.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1200422

Principal address
20 Parsonage Road
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9JG

Trustees
Maureen Stiller
Fiona Ainsworth
Clare Graham (resigned 13.7.24)
Sharron Bassett (resigned 29.1.25)
Mary Hogg
Michael Kenning
Fiona Riley
Marion Davies (resigned 7.4.25)
Heather Thomas
Matthew Huntley (resigned 13.7.24)
Richard Jenkyns (resigned 13.7.24)
Andrea Clarke

Independent Examiner
D A Sanders BA (Hons) FCA
Sheen Stickland
Chartered Accountants
2 Oriel Court
Omega Park
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 2YT

Bankers
Nat West Bank Plc
105 High Street
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9AH

RESERVES
The Society's policy regarding reserves is detailed in note 1 on page 8 of these accounts. The trustees consider, on the basis of current information available, that these funds are adequate to meet their known future commitments.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 5th June 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Heather Thomas - Trustee

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Jane Austen Society
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Jane Austen Society (the Trust) for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

D A Sanders BA (Hons) FCA

Sheen Stickland
Chartered Accountants
2 Oriel Court
Omega Park
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 2YT

6th June 2025

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Year Ended 31.12.24 Total funds £	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Subscriptions, donations and legacies	2	27,398	-	27,398	23,856
Other charitable activities	3	71,403	-	71,403	28,076
Investment income	4	6,908	-	6,908	8,598
Other income	5	-	-	-	330,612
Total		105,709	-	105,709	391,142
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Charitable activities		110,209	-	110,209	62,382
Net gains on investments		5,630	-	5,630	21,052
NET INCOME		1,130	-	1,130	349,812
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets		(32,000)	-	(32,000)	-
Net movement in funds		(30,870)	-	(30,870)	349,812
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		348,812	1,000	349,812	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		317,942	1,000	318,942	349,812

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Balance Sheet
31st December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Heritage assets	9	28,000	-	28,000	60,000
Investments	10	248,783	-	248,783	250,153
		276,783	-	276,783	310,153
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	8,550	-	8,550	5,662
Cash at bank		37,524	1,000	38,524	41,590
		46,074	1,000	47,074	47,252
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(4,915)	-	(4,915)	(7,593)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		41,159	1,000	42,159	39,659
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		317,942	1,000	318,942	349,812
NET ASSETS		317,942	1,000	318,942	349,812
FUNDS	13				
Unrestricted funds				317,942	348,812
Restricted funds				1,000	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS				318,942	349,812

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 5th June 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Heather Thomas - Trustee

Andrea Clarke - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements
The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1st January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of heritage assets and investments which are included at market value.

Income
All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

The net assets of the unincorporated charity, The Jane Austen Society, were transferred to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation at their value as shown in the accounts of the unincorporated charity for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds earmarked for particular purposes by the trustees of the Society in the exercise of their discretionary powers.

Restricted Funds are funds which are subject to a restriction as to their use.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Investments
Investments are stated at mid-market value at the balance sheet date. All movements in value arising from investment changes are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Unrealised gains and/or losses are the difference in market value of investments held at the beginning of the year, or their cost if purchased in the year, and at the end of the year.

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Heritage Assets
Under the provisions of the Charities SORP heritage assets are included on the balance sheet at their latest valuation.

Reserves
The balance of the general fund (excluding designated funds and the value of heritage assets) represents approximately 20 months expenditure (based on expenditure in the year ended 31st December 2024) which the trustees consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

£120,000 of the legacies received, by the unincorporated charity, in the years ended 31st December 2003 and 31st December 2004 was transferred to a designated fund to cover a range of the Society's educational activities. The trustees consider that the Society website forms part of its educational activities and therefore the cost of upgrading this was charged to the Education Fund.

Branches and Groups
Branches of the Society as defined in charity law are an integral part of the Society and as such enjoy various privileges and responsibilities in regard to the Society. In particular a branch can call upon the Society for financial support and is covered by the public liability insurance of the Society. The financial results of the branches are incorporated into the Society's statement of financial activities and the assets and liabilities of branches are included in the Society's balance sheet.

A group is an informal gathering of members of the Society (or others) from a particular area and has no connection in law with The Jane Austen Society, and the financial activities of groups are not included in these accounts.

Details of activities of the branches are shown in note 15 to the accounts.

Website Costs
Website costs are recognised as an expense in the year of expenditure as, in the opinion of the trustees, the primary function of the website is to promote the activities of the charity and therefore does not meet the conditions required to be treated as an intangible fixed asset.

2. SUBSCRIPTIONS, DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Year Ended 31.12.24	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23
	£	£
Annual subscriptions received	19,189	14,673
Gift Aid tax recoverable	1,661	1,690
Sundry donations and receipts	6,548	2,436
Legacies	-	5,057
	27,398	23,856

continued...

3. OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 31.12.24	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23
	£	£
Sales of fundraising items	85	5
Income from events	26,544	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	2,783	2,427
Income of branches	41,991	25,644
	71,403	28,076

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Year Ended 31.12.24	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23
	£	£
Income from listed investments	6,908	8,598

5. OTHER INCOME

	Year Ended 31.12.24	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23
	£	£
Net assets transferred from unincorporated charity	-	330,612

Other income in the year ended 31st December 2023 represents the value of the net assets of the unincorporated charity, The Jane Austen Society (charity number 1040613), which were transferred to the charity on 1st January 2023.

6. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2024 nor for the period ended 31st December 2023.

continued...

6. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS - continued

Trustees' expenses

During the period a total of £1,036 (2023 - £1,532) was reimbursed to seven trustees (2023 - seven trustees) in respect of travelling and other expenses.

7. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Subscriptions, donations and legacies	23,856	-	23,856
Other charitable activities	28,076	-	28,076
Investment income	8,598	-	8,598
Other income	329,612	1,000	330,612
Total	390,142	1,000	391,142
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Charitable activities	62,382	-	62,382
Net gains on investments	21,052	-	21,052
NET INCOME	348,812	1,000	349,812
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	348,812	1,000	349,812

8. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR

	2024 £
Independent examiner's remuneration	2,100
Other accountancy fees	1,020
	3,120

continued...

9. HERITAGE ASSETS

	Total £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1st January 2024	60,000
Revaluations	(32,000)
At 31st December 2024	28,000
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31st December 2024	28,000
At 31st December 2023	60,000

The Society acquired a portrait of Edward Austen-Knight in 1953. This portrait is now on display at Chawton House Library under a long term loan agreement. This was originally included in the financial statements as a heritage asset at the professional valuation prepared by Woolley and Wallis in May 2015. The portrait was revalued for insurance purposes on 15th January 2025 by Andrew Smith & Son at £28,000.

The Society has a clear duty of care for this asset and provisions in this respect are set out in the loan agreement. Any decision regarding public access to the portrait will be at the discretion of Chawton House Library.

The Society does not envisage the acquisition of any heritage assets in the future but will continue to support the Jane Austen's House Museum in any appropriate acquisition by the museum, in particular by the use of funds held in the 250 Fund.

Cost or valuation at 31st December 2024 is represented by:

	Portrait £
Valuation in 2024	28,000

10. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	Listed investments £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1st January 2024	250,153
Disposals	(6,866)
Revaluations	5,496
At 31st December 2024	248,783
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31st December 2024	248,783
At 31st December 2023	250,153

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

continued...

10. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS - continued

Cost or valuation at 31st December 2024 is represented by:

	Listed investments
	£
Valuation in 2024	248,783

Investments at 31st December 2024 represents 12,259 units in the COIF Charities Investment Fund (2023 - 12,605 units)

The historical cost of fixed asset investments at 31st December 2024 was £222,813 (2023 - £229,101). This represents the remaining balance of the market value of the investments on the transfer from the unincorporated charity.

11. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other debtors	3,500	3,931
Prepayments and accrued income	5,050	1,731
	8,550	5,662

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other creditors	1,704	2,793
Accruals and deferred income	3,211	4,800
	4,915	7,593

continued...

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	233,722	(30,970)	202,752
Education Fund	100,555	-	100,555
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	10,000	-	10,000
250 Fund	4,535	100	4,635
	348,812	(30,870)	317,942
Restricted funds			
Acquistion fund	1,000	-	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS	349,812	(30,870)	318,942

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	105,609	(110,209)	(26,370)	(30,970)
250 Fund	100	-	-	100
	105,709	(110,209)	(26,370)	(30,870)
TOTAL FUNDS	105,709	(110,209)	(26,370)	(30,870)

continued...

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.23 £
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	233,722	233,722
Education Fund	100,555	100,555
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	10,000	10,000
250 Fund	4,535	4,535
	348,812	348,812
Restricted funds		
Acquistion fund	1,000	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS	349,812	349,812

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	273,554	(60,884)	21,052	233,722
Education Fund	100,555	-	-	100,555
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	10,000	-	-	10,000
250 Fund	6,033	(1,498)	-	4,535
	390,142	(62,382)	21,052	348,812
Restricted funds				
Acquistion fund	1,000	-	-	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS	391,142	(62,382)	21,052	349,812

continued...

14. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions in the year ended 31st December 2024 or the year ended 31st December 2023.

15. BRANCHES

	Midlands	Kent	Northern	Scotland	South West	London	Hampshire	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income								
Subscriptions	-	1,085	1,307	1,213	630	510	444	5,189
Income from events	-	2,806	3,769	3,810	13,549	6,224	503	30,661
Sales of publications	-	117	-	218	-	126	-	461
Donations	-	5,126	30	12	-	172	7	5,347
Interest	-	85	30	18	-	-	-	133
Other income	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	200
	-	9,219	5,136	5,471	14,179	7,032	954	41,991

	Midlands	Kent	Northern	Scotland	South West	London	Hampshire	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Expenses								
Expenses of events	-	4,580	2,927	4,211	14,277	7,405	632	34,032
Cost of publications	-	36	982	-	-	156	-	1,174
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	500
Administration expenses	-	655	299	844	144	141	92	2,175
	-	5,271	4,208	5,055	14,421	7,702	1,224	37,881
Branch surplus/(deficit)	-	3,948	928	416	(242)	(670)	(270)	4,110

Due to unforeseen circumstances, information regarding the Midlands Branch for the year ended 31st December 2024 is not available. The results for the year ended 31st December 2024, will therefore be included in the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025.

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

	Year Ended 31.12.24 £	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Subscriptions, donations and legacies		
Annual subscriptions received	19,189	14,673
Gift Aid tax recoverable	1,661	1,690
Sundry donations and receipts	6,548	2,436
Legacies	-	5,057
	27,398	23,856
Other charitable activities		
Sales of fundraising items	85	5
Income from events	26,544	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	2,783	2,427
Income of branches	41,991	25,644
	71,403	28,076
Investment income		
Income from listed investments	6,908	8,598
Other income		
Net assets transferred from unincorporated charity	-	330,612
Total incoming resources	105,709	391,142
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities		
Printing and stationery	632	-
Website	3,579	3,939
Subscriptions	409	25
Insurance	651	757
Sundry expenses	40	40
Newsletter	9,780	9,882
Expenses of events	26,402	-
Members' database	4,018	673
Annual General Meeting	13,707	8,535
Annual Report	7,507	6,778
Carried forward	66,725	30,629

The Jane Austen Society
(a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2024

	Year Ended 31.12.24 £	Period 21.9.22 to 31.12.23 £
Charitable activities		
Brought forward	66,725	30,629
Bank charges	-	98
Expenses of branches	37,881	24,867
Bank charges	193	-
Grants	-	150
	104,799	55,744
Support costs		
Management		
Trustees' expenses	1,126	1,178
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	3,120	4,560
Legal and professional fees	1,164	900
	4,284	5,460
Total resources expended	110,209	62,382
Net (expenditure)/income before gains and losses	(4,500)	328,760
Realised recognised gains and losses		
Realised gains/(losses) on fixed asset investments	134	-
Net (expenditure)/income	(4,366)	328,760

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Drawn by Thos. H. Shepherd.

Engraved by J. Rouhall.

FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, GUILDFORD STREET.